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THE WORKS

OF

GEORGE BERKELEY, D.D.,

BISHOP OF CLOYNE, 1685–1753.

INCLUDING

HIS LETTERS TO THOMAS PRIOR, Esq., DEAN GERVAIS, MR. POPE, &c. &c.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

AN ACCOUNT OF HIS LIFE.

IN THIS EDITION THE LATIN ESSAYS ARE RENDERED INTO ENGLISH, AND THE "INTRODUCTION TO HUMAN KNOWLEDGE" ANNOTATED,

BY THE

REV. G. N. WRIGHT, M.A.

EDITOR OF THE WORKS OF REID AND STEWART.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

ALTHOUGH the several treatises of the author in defence of Christianity,—in support of the diffusion of knowledge,—on discovering new means for the alleviation of human suffering,—and on promoting the study of metaphysics and mathematics, have obtained the applause of the learned, yet their association with his new and difficult theory in pneumatology militated so far against their reception with the public in general, that one perfect edition only of his works has hitherto ever appeared. This was a circumstance much to be regretted, since no other writer, of the literary age in which he flourished, has left more able, original, or useful advice, in religion, philosophy, and politics.

His tracts, his treatises and essays, are brought together in this edition, in which the author's letters are also included, having first been carefully collated with those published by George Monck Berkeley in his "Literary Relics:" and the treatises, *Arithmetica absque Algebra aut Euclide Demonstrata; Miscellanea Mathematica; and De Motu*, written originally in Latin, are here presented in literal English versions. "The Principles of Human Knowledge," however, seemed to require a greater degree of editorial attention than the other learned labours of the author, from their novelty, their difficulty, and the misrepresentations that have been circulated with respect to them by the ignorant or the envious. The editor of the quarto edition of Berkeley's works, appears to have taken unauthorized liberties with the text of this particular treatise, as printed in the original edition, which had the benefit of the philosopher's own

revision, by omitting very many passages, some of which materially affect the meaning. These passages have been restored, either in the text itself, or in the form of notes,—sectional heads have been prefixed, and the leading terms, or sentences, or paragraphs in each section, either printed in italics or included within brackets:—indices are placed before the illustrations or examples, and notes, referring to attempted refutations of the author's arguments by Reid and others, added, with a caution not likely to disturb the reader's train of thought in penetrating the intricacies of this ingenious system.

These prefatory notices, intended solely to establish the superior care that has been bestowed upon this complete edition of the author's writings, afford no opportunity for entering upon a defence of his theory. It will not, however, be misplaced to observe, that Dr. Reid, the only adversary who has assailed "The Principles of Human Knowledge" with any degree of plausibility, has not gone deep enough in the investigation; he imagined that when he should have overthrown the philosophic scheme of Ideas, Berkeley's theory would necessarily become involved in the general ruin; but Berkeley's theory does not depend on the truth or falsehood of that ancient hypothesis, but on this fact, that "there is no necessary connexion in reason and language between our perceptions and the existence of external objects; since we know it not unfrequently happens, that objects *appear to be present* to the senses when disordered, although we know they are *not present*." Reid has not refuted Berkeley, nor even struck at the leading root of his system; no other antagonist has assailed his doctrines with equal ability or success; Berkeley, therefore, remains unanswered.

G. N. W.

Coed Celyn, Llanrwst, Denbighshire, 1843.

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THE

LIFE OF BISHOP BERKELEY.*

Dr. George Berkeley, the learned and ingenious bishop of Cloyne, in Ireland, was a native of that kingdom, and the son of William Berkeley, of Thomastown, in the county of Killkenny, whose father went over to Ireland † after the restoration (the family having suffered greatly for their loyalty to Charles I.), and there obtained the collectorship of Belfast.

Our author was born on the 12th of March, 1684, at Killcrin, near Thomastown, received the first part of his education at Killkenny school, under Dr. Hinton, and was admitted a pensioner of Trinity College, Dublin, at the age of fifteen, under the tuition of Dr. Hall. He was admitted fellow of that college on the 9th of June, 1707, having previously sustained with honour the very trying examination which the candidates for that preferment are by the statutes required to undergo.

The first proof he gave of his literary abilities was *Arithmetica absque Algebra aut Euclide Demonstrata*, which, from the preface, he appears to have written before he was twenty years old, though he did not publish it till 1707. It is dedicated to Mr. Palliser, son to the Archbishop of Cashel, and is followed by a Mathematical Miscellany, containing some very ingenious observations and theorems, inscribed to his pupil, Mr. Samuel Molyneaux, a gentleman of whom we shall have occasion to make further mention presently, and whose father was the celebrated friend and correspondent of Mr. Locke.

His *Theory of Vision* was published in 1709, and the *Prin-*

* To authenticate the following account of Bishop Berkeley, it is thought proper to inform the reader, that the particulars were, for the most part, communicated by the Rev. Robert Berkeley, D.D., rector of Middleton, in the diocese of Cloyne, brother to the Bishop; and the whole was drawn up by the Rev. Joseph Stock, D.D., F.T.C.D.; and afterwards bishop of Killala.

The Editor takes this opportunity of returning his sincere thanks to the Rev. Dr. Stock, rector of Conwell, Raphoe, for his trouble in compiling and revising this edition; and to the Rev. Mervyn Archdall, rector of Attannah, Ossory; and the Rev. Henry Gervais, LL.D., archdeacon of Cashel, for their obliging communication of the letters to Thomas Prior, Esq., and Dean Gervais, which have added so much to the value of this edition.

† In the suite of his reputed father, Lord Berkeley of Stratton, who had been appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

ciples of Human Knowledge appeared the year after.* The airy visions of romances, to the reading of which he was much addicted, disgust at the books of metaphysics then received in the university, and that inquisitive attention to the operations of the mind, which about this time was excited by the writings of Mr. Locke and Father Malebranche, probably gave birth to his disbelief of the existence of matter.†

In 1712, the principles inculcated in Mr. Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* seem to have turned his attention to the doctrine of passive obedience; in support of which he printed the substance of three Common-places, delivered by him that year in the college chapel, a work which afterwards had nearly done him some injury in his fortune. For, being presented by Mr. Molyneaux above-mentioned to their late majesties, then Prince and Princess of Wales (whose secretary Mr. Molyneaux had been at Hanover), he was by them recommended to Lord Galway for some preferment in the church of Ireland. But Lord Galway, having heard of those sermons, represented him as a Jacobite; an impression which Mr. Molyneaux, as soon as he

* The first edition (8vo), the only one published in the Author's life-time, was printed in 1710, by Aaron Rhames, for Jeremy Pepyat, Bookseller, in Skinner Row, Dublin.

† When the Principles of Human Knowledge were first published, the ingenious author sent copies of the work to Dr. Clarke and Mr. Whiston. What effect it produced upon the latter, the reader may possibly be entertained with learning from his own words: Memoirs of Dr. Clarke, page 79—81.

"And perhaps it will not be here improper, by way of caution, to take notice of the pernicious consequence such metaphysical subtilties have sometimes had, even against common sense and common experience, as in the cases of those three famous men, Mons. Leibnitz, Mr. Locke, and Mr. Berkeley.—[The first in his Pre-established Harmony: the second in the dispute with Limborch about human liberty.]—And as to the third named, Mr. Berkeley, he published, A. D. 1710, at Dublin, this metaphysic notion, that *matter* was not *a real thing*; nay, that the common opinion of its *reality* was groundless, if not ridiculous. He was pleased to send Dr. Clarke and myself, each of us, a book. After we had both perused it, I went to Dr. Clarke, and discoursed with him about it to this effect; that I, being not a metaphysician, was not able to answer Mr. Berkeley's subtile *premises*, though I did not at all believe his absurd *conclusion*. I therefore desired that he, who was deep in such subtilties, but did not appear to believe Mr. Berkeley's conclusions, would answer him: which task he declined. I speak not these things with intention to reproach either Mr. Locke or Dean Berkeley. I own the latter's great abilities in other parts of learning; and to his noble design of settling a college in or near the West Indies, for the instruction of the natives in civil arts and in the principles of Christianity, I heartily wish all possible success. It is the pretended metaphysic science itself, derived from the sceptical disputes of the Greek philosophers, not those particular great men who have been unhappily imposed on by it, that I complain of. Accordingly when the famous Milton had a mind to represent the vain reasonings of wicked spirits in Hades, he described it by their endless train of metaphysics, thus:—

'Others apart sat on a hill retired,' &c. Par. Lost, ii. 557—561."

Many years after this, at Mr. Addison's instance, there was a meeting of Drs. Clarke and Berkeley to discuss this speculative point; and great hopes were entertained from the conference. The parties, however, separated without being able to come to any agreement. Dr. B. declared himself not well satisfied with the conduct of his antagonist on the occasion, who, though he could not answer, had not candour enough to own himself convinced. But the complaints of disputants against each other, especially on subjects of this abstruse nature, should be heard with suspicion.

was apprised of it, took care to remove from the minds of their highnesses by producing the work in question, and showing that it contained nothing but principles of loyalty to the present happy establishment. This was the first occasion of our author's being known to Queen Caroline.

In February, 1713, he crossed the water, and published in London a further defence of his celebrated system of immaterialism, in *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous.* Acuteness of parts and a beautiful imagination were so conspicuous in his writings, that his reputation was now established, and his company was courted, even where his opinions did not find admission. Two gentlemen of opposite principles concurred in introducing him to the acquaintance of the learned and the great; Sir Richard Steele and Dr. Swift. He wrote several papers in the Guardian* for the former, and at his house became acquainted with Mr. Pope, with whom he continued to live in strict friendship during his life. Dean Swift, besides Lord Berkeley of Stratton (to whom our author dedicated his last published dialogues between Hylas and Philonous), and other valuable acquaintance, recommended him to the celebrated earl of Peterborough, who being appointed ambassador to the king of Sicily and to the other Italian states, took Mr. Berkeley with him in quality of chaplain and secretary, in November, 1713.

At Leghorn, his lordship's well-known activity induced him to disencumber himself of his chaplain and the greatest part of his retinue, whom he left in that town for upwards of three months, while he discharged the business of his embassy in Sicily, as our author informs his friend Pope in the conclusion of a complimentary letter addressed to that poet on the Rape of the Lock, dated Leghorn, 1st of May, 1714. It may not be amiss to record a little incident that befell Mr. Berkeley in this city, with the relation of which he used sometimes to make himself merry among his friends. Basil Kennett, the author of the Roman Antiquities, was then chaplain to the English factory at Leghorn, the only place in Italy where the English service is tolerated by the government, which favour had lately been obtained from the Grand Duke at the particular instance of Queen Anne. This gentleman requested Mr. Berkeley to preach for him one Sunday. The day following, as Berkeley was sitting in his chamber, a procession of priests in surplices, and with all other formalities, entered the room, and without taking the least notice of the wondering inhabitant, marched quite round it, muttering certain prayers. His fears immediately suggested to him, that this could be no other than a visit from the Inquisition, who had heard of his officiating before heretics without license, the

* No. 69 is known to have been his contribution, the rest were never identified by his family or friends.

day before. As soon as they were gone, he ventured with much caution to inquire into the cause of this extraordinary appearance, and was happy to be informed, that this was the season appointed by the Romish calendar for solemnly blessing the houses of all good catholics from rats and other vermin; a piece of intelligence which changed his terror into mirth.

He returned to England with Lord Peterborough in August, 1714;* and his hopes of preferment through this channel expiring with the fall of Queen Anne's ministry, he some time after embraced an advantageous offer made him by Dr. St. George Ashe, bishop of Clogher, and previously Provost of Trinity College, Dublin, of accompanying his son, Mr. Ashe (who was heir to a very considerable property), on a tour through Europe.

At Paris, having now more leisure than when he first passed through that city, Mr. Berkeley took care to pay his respects to his rival in metaphysical sagacity, the illustrious Père Malebranche. He found this ingenious father in his cell, cooking in a small pipkin a medicine for a disorder with which he was then troubled, an inflammation on the lungs. The conversation naturally turned on our author's system, of which the other had received some knowledge from a translation just published. But the issue of this debate proved tragical to poor Malebranche. In the heat of disputation he raised his voice so high, and gave way so freely to the natural impetuosity of a man of parts and a Frenchman, that he brought on himself a violent increase of his disorder, which carried him off a few days after.†

In this second excursion abroad Mr. Berkeley employed upwards of four years; and besides all those places which are usually visited by travellers in what is called the grand tour, his curiosity carried him to some that are less frequented. In particular he travelled over Apulia (from which he wrote an accurate and entertaining account of the tarantula to Dr. Freind), Calabria, and the whole island of Sicily. This last country engaged his attention so strongly, that he had with great industry compiled very considerable materials for a natural history of the island; but, by an unfortunate accident, these, together with a journal of his transactions there, were lost in the passage to Naples; nor could he be prevailed upon afterwards to recollect and commit those curious particulars again to paper. What an injury the literary world has sustained by this mischance, may in

* Towards the close of this year he had a fever, in describing the event of which to his friend Swift, Dr. Arbuthnot cannot forbear indulging a little of that pleasantry on Berkeley's system, with which it has frequently since been treated by such as could not, or would not, be at the pains to acquire a thorough knowledge of it. "19th of October, 1714. Poor philosopher Berkeley has now *the idea of health*, which was very hard to produce in him; for he had *an idea* of a strange fever on him so strong, that it was very hard to destroy it by introducing a contrary one."

† He died the 13th of October, 1715. Dict. Hist. Portatif d'Advocat.

part be collected from the specimen he has left of his talent for lively description, in his letter to Mr. Pope concerning the island of Inarime (now Ischia, in the bay of Naples), dated Naples, 22nd of October, 1717; and in another from the same city to Dr. Arbuthnot, giving an account of an eruption of mount Vesuvius, which he had the good fortune to have more than one opportunity of examining very minutely.

On his way homeward, he drew up at Lyons a curious tract *De Motu*, which he sent to the royal academy of sciences at Paris, the subject being proposed by that assembly, and committed it to the press shortly after his arrival in London in 1721. But from these abstruse speculations he was drawn away for a while by the humanity of his temper and concern for the public welfare. It is well known what miseries the nation was plunged into by the fatal South Sea scheme in 1720. Mr. Berkeley felt for his country and British neighbours groaning under these calamitous distresses, and in that spirit employed his talents in writing *An Essay towards preventing the Ruin of Great Britain*, printed at London in 1721.

His travels had now so far improved his natural politeness, and added such charms to his conversation, that he found a ready admission into the best company in London. Among the rest, Mr. Pope introduced him to Lord Burlington, who conceived a high esteem for him on account of his great taste and skill in architecture, an art of which his lordship was an excellent judge and patron, and which Mr. Berkeley had made his particular study while in Italy. By this nobleman he was recommended to the duke of Grafton, lord lieutenant of Ireland, who took him over to Ireland as one of his chaplains in 1721, after he had been absent from his native country more than six years. He had been elected a senior fellow of his college in July, 1717, and took the degrees of bachelor and doctor in divinity, on the 14th of November, 1721.

The year following, his fortune received a considerable increase from a very unexpected event. On his first going to London in the year 1713, Dean Swift introduced him to the family of Mrs. Esther Vanhomrigh (the celebrated Vanessa), and took him often to dine at her house. Some years before her death, this lady removed to Ireland, and fixed her residence at Cell-bridge, a pleasant village in the neighbourhood of Dublin, most probably with a view of often enjoying the company of a man, for whom she seems to have entertained a very singular attachment. But finding herself totally disappointed in this expectation, and discovering the dean's connexion with Stella, she was so enraged at his infidelity, that she altered her intention of making him her heir, and left the whole of her fortune, amounting to near 8000*l.*, to be divided equally between two gentlemen whom she named her executors,

Mr. Marshal, a lawyer, afterwards Mr. Justice Marshal, and Dr. Berkeley, S.F.T.C.D. The doctor received the news of this bequest from Mr. Marshal with great surprise, as he had never once seen the lady who had honoured him with such a proof of her esteem, from the time of his return to Ireland to her death.

In the discharge however of his trust as executor, he had an opportunity of showing he by no means adopted the sentiments of his benefactress with regard to Swift. Several letters, that had passed between Cadenus and Vanessa, falling into his hands, he committed them immediately to the flames: not because there was any thing criminal in them; for he frequently assured Dr. Delany * and others of the contrary; but he observed a warmth in the lady's style, which delicacy required him to conceal from the public. Dr. Berkeley, it seems, was not apprised of a strong proof this exasperated female had just given, how little regard she herself retained for the virtue of delicacy. On her death-bed she delivered to Mr. Marshal a copy, in her own hand-writing, of the entire correspondence between herself and the dean, with a strict injunction to publish it immediately after her decease. What prevented the execution of this request, cannot now be affirmed with certainty; possibly the executor did not care to draw on himself the lash of that pen, from which a particular friend of his † had lately smarted so severely. Some years after the dean's death, Mr. Marshal had serious thoughts of fulfilling the intention of Vanessa. With this view, he showed the letters to several persons of his acquaintance, without any injunction of secresy: which may account for the extracts of them that have lately got into print. The affair however was protracted, till the death of Judge Marshal put a stop to it entirely. The letters are still in being; and whenever curiosity or avarice shall draw them into public light, it is probable they will be found after all to be as trifling and as innocent as those which our author saw and suppressed.

On the 18th of May, 1724, Dr. Berkeley resigned his fellowship, being promoted by his patron, the duke of Grafton, to the deanery of Derry, worth 1100*l.* per annum. In the interval between this removal and his return from abroad, his mind had been employed in conceiving that benevolent project, which alone entitles him to as much honour as all his learned labours have procured him, the *Scheme for converting the savage Americans to Christianity, by a College to be erected in the Summer Islands, otherwise called the Isles of Bermuda.* He published a proposal‡ for this purpose, London, 1725, and offered to resign his own

* See Delany's Observations on Orrery's Remarks. † Mr. Bettesworth.

‡ With this proposal he carried a letter of recommendation from Dean Swift to Lord Carteret, lieutenant of Ireland, which deserves a place here, both because

opulent preferment, and to dedicate the remainder of his life to the instructing the youth in America, on the moderate subsistence of 100*l.* yearly. Such was the force of this disinterested example, supported by the eloquence of an enthusiast for the good of mankind, that three junior fellows of Trinity College, Dublin, the Reverend William Thompson, Jonathan Rogers, and James King, masters of arts, consented to take their fortunes with the author of the project, and to exchange for a settlement in the Atlantic ocean, at 40*l.* per annum, all their prospects at home; and that, too, at a time when a fellowship of Dublin College was supposed to place the possessor in a very fair point of view for attracting the notice of his superiors both in the church and state.

Dr. Berkeley, however, was not so ill acquainted with the world, as to rest the success of his application to the ministry entirely on the hope his scheme afforded of promoting national honour and the cause of Christianity: his arguments were drawn from the more alluring topic of present advantage to the government. Having with much industry acquired an accurate know-

it contains a number of particulars of our author's life, and is besides a proof, as well of the friendly temper of the writer, as of his politeness and address.

"3rd of September, 1724.—There is a gentleman of this kingdom just gone for England: it is Dr. George Berkeley, dean of Derry, the best preferment among us, being worth about 1100*l.* a year. He takes the Bath in his way to London, and will of course attend your Excellency, and be presented, I suppose, by his friend, my Lord Burlington: and because I believe you will choose out some very idle minutes to read this letter, perhaps you may not be ill entertained with some account of the man and his errand. He was a fellow in the university here; and going to England very young, about thirteen years ago, he became the founder of a sect there, called the Immaterialists, by the force of a very curious book on that subject: Dr. Smalridge and many other eminent persons were his proselytes. I sent him secretary and chaplain to Sicily with my lord Peterborough; and upon his lordship's return, Dr. Berkeley spent above seven years in travelling over most parts of Europe, but chiefly through every corner of Italy, Sicily, and other islands. When he came back to England, he found so many friends, that he was effectually recommended to the duke of Grafton, by whom he was lately made dean of Derry. Your Excellency will be frighted when I tell you, all this is but an introduction; for I am now to mention his errand. He is an absolute philosopher with regard to money, titles, and power; and for three years past hath been struck with a notion of founding a university at Bermuda, by a charter from the crown. He hath seduced several of the hopefulest young clergymen and others here, many of them well provided for, and all of them in the fairest way of preferment: but in England his conquests are greater, and I doubt will spread very far this winter. He showed me a little tract which he designs to publish, and there your Excellency will see his whole scheme of a life academico-philosophical (I shall make you remember what you were) of a college founded for Indian scholars and missionaries, where he most exorbitantly proposeth a whole hundred pounds a year for himself, forty pounds for a fellow, and ten for a student. His heart will break, if his deanery be not taken from him, and left to your Excellency's disposal. I discourage him by the coldness of courts and ministers, who will interpret all this as impossible and a vision; but nothing will do. And therefore I do humbly entreat your Excellency either to use such persuasions as will keep one of the first men in this kingdom for learning and virtue quite at home, or assist him by your credit to compass his romantic design, which however is very noble and generous, and directly proper for a great person of your excellent education to encourage."

ledge of the value of certain lands* in the island of St. Christopher's, yielded by France to Great Britain at the treaty of Utrecht, which were then to be sold for the public use, he undertook to raise from them a much greater sum than was expected, and proposed that a part of the purchase money should be applied to the erecting of his college. He found means, by the assistance of a Venetian of distinction, the Abbe Gualteri (or Altieri) with whom he had formed an acquaintance in Italy, to carry this proposal directly to King George I.,† who laid his commands on Sir Robert Walpole to introduce and conduct it through the House of Commons. His Majesty was further pleased to grant a charter for erecting a college, by the name of St. Paul's College, in Bermuda, to consist of a president and nine fellows, who were obliged to maintain and educate Indian scholars at the rate of 10*l.* per annum for each. The first president, Dr. George Berkeley, and first three fellows named in the charter (being the gentlemen above-mentioned) were licensed to hold their preferments in these kingdoms till the expiration of one year and a half after their arrival in Bermuda. The Commons, on the 11th of May, 1726, voted, "That an humble address be presented to his Majesty, that out of the lands in St. Christopher's, yielded by France to Great Britain by the treaty of Utrecht, his Majesty would be graciously pleased to make such grant for the use of the president and fellows of the College of St. Paul, in Bermuda, as his Majesty shall think proper." The sum of 20,000*l.* was accordingly promised by the minister, and several private subscriptions were immediately raised for promoting "so pious an undertaking," as it is styled in the king's answer‡ to this address. Such a prospect of success in the favourite object of his heart drew from our author a beautiful

* "The island of St. Christopher's," saith Anderson, History of Commerce vol. ii., "having been settled on the very same day and year by both England and France, A. D. 1625, was divided equally between the two nations. The English were twice driven out from thence by the French, and as often re-possessed themselves of it. But at length, in the year 1702, General Coddrington, Governor of the Leeward Islands, upon advice received that war was declared by England against France, attacked the French part of the island, and mastered it with very little trouble. Ever since which time, that fine island has been solely possessed by Great Britain, having been formally conceded to us by the treaty of Utrecht." The lands, therefore, which had belonged to the French planters, by this cession became the property of his Britannic Majesty. The first proposals for purchasing these lands were made to the Lords of Trade in 1717: see Journal of the British Commons After which, the affair seems to have been forgotten, till it was mentioned by Berkeley to Sir Robert Walpole in 1726.

† It was the custom of this prince to unbend his mind in the evening by collecting together a company of philosophical foreigners, who discoursed in an easy and familiar manner with each other, entirely unrestrained by the presence of his Majesty, who generally walked about, or sat in a retired part of the chamber. One of this select company was Altieri, and this gave him an opportunity of laying his friend's proposal before the king.

‡ Commons' Journal, 16th of May, 1726.

copy of verses,* in which another age will acknowledge the old conjunction of the prophetic character with that of the poet to have again taken place.

In the mean time, the dean entered into a marriage, on the 1st of August, 1728, with Anne, the eldest daughter of the right honourable John Forster, speaker of the Irish House of Commons. This engagement, however, was so far from being any obstruction to his grand undertaking, that he actually set sail in the execution of it for Rhode Island, about the middle of September following. He carried with him his lady, a Miss Handcock, Mr. Smilert (Smibert), an ingenious painter, two gentlemen of fortune, Messrs. James† and Dalton, a pretty large sum of money of his own property, and a collection of books for the use of his intended library. He directed his course to Rhode Island, which lay nearest to Bermuda, with a view of purchasing lands on the adjoining continent as estates for the support of his college; having a positive promise from those in power, that the parliamentary grant should be paid him as soon as ever such lands should be pitched upon and agreed for. The dean took up his residence at Newport in Rhode Island, where his presence was a great relief to a clergyman of the church of England established in those parts, as he preached every Sunday, and was indefatigable in pastoral labours during the whole time of his stay there, which was near two years.

When estates had been agreed for, it was fully expected that the public money would, according to grant, be immediately paid as the purchase of them. But the minister had never heartily embraced the project, and parliamentary influence had by this time interposed, in order to divert the grant into another channel. The sale of the lands in St. Christopher's, it was found, would produce 90,000*l.* Of this sum 80,000*l.*‡ was destined to pay the marriage portion of the princess royal, on her nuptials with the Prince of Orange: the remainder, General Oglethorpe§ had interest enough in parliament to obtain for the purpose of carrying over and settling foreign and other protestants in his new colony of Georgia, in America. The project, indeed, of the trustees for establishing this colony appears to have been equally humane and disinterested; but it is much to be lamented, that it should interfere with another of more extensive and lasting utility; which, if it had taken effect by the education of the youth of New England and other colonies, we may venture with great appearance of reason to affirm, would have planted such principles of religion and loyalty

* See verses subjoined to proposal for planting churches, &c.

† Afterwards Sir John James, Bart. ‡ Commons' Journal, May 10, 1773.

§ Ibid. The general paid Dean B. the compliment of asking his consent to this application of the money before he moved for it in parliament.

among them as might have gone a good way towards preventing the subsequent unhappy troubles in that part of the world. But to proceed:

After having received various excuses, Bishop Gibson, at that time bishop of London (in whose diocese all the West Indies were included) applying to Sir Robert Walpole, then at the head of the treasury, was favoured at length with the following very honest answer: "If you put this question to me," says Sir Robert, "as a minister, I must and can assure you, that the money shall most undoubtedly be paid as soon as suits with public convenience: but if you ask me as a friend, whether Dean Berkeley should continue in America, expecting the payment of 20,000*l.*, I advise him by all means to return home to Europe, and to give up his present expectations." The dean being informed of this conference by his good friend the bishop, and thereby fully convinced that the bad policy of one great man had rendered abortive a scheme, whereon he had expended much of his private fortune, and more than seven years of the prime of his life, returned to Europe. Before he left Rhode Island, he distributed what books he had brought with him among the clergy of that province; and immediately after his arrival in London, he returned all the private subscriptions that had been advanced for the support of his undertaking.

In February, 1732, he preached, before the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, a sermon, since printed at their desire; wherein, from his own knowledge of the state of religion in America, he offers many useful hints towards promoting the noble purposes for which that society was founded.

The same year, he gave a more conspicuous proof that he had not mispent the time he had been confined on the other side of the Atlantic, by producing to the world *The Minute Philosopher*, a masterly performance, wherein he pursues the freethinker through the various characters of atheist, libertine, enthusiast, scorner, critic, metaphysician, fatalist, and sceptic; and very happily employs against him several new weapons, drawn from the store-house of his own ingenious system of philosophy. It is written in a series of dialogues on the model of Plato, a philosopher whom he studied particularly, and whose manner he is thought to have copied with more success than any other that ever attempted to imitate him.

We have already related by what means, and upon what occasion, Dr. Berkeley had first the honour of being known to Queen Caroline. This princess delighted much in attending to philosophical conversations between learned and ingenious men; for which purpose she had, when Princess of Wales, appointed a particular day in the week, when the most eminent for literary abilities at that time in England were invited to attend her

royal highness in the evening: a practice which she continued after her accession to the throne. Of this company were Drs. Clarke, Hoadley, Berkeley, and Sherlock. Clarke and Berkeley were generally considered as principals in the debates that arose upon those occasions; and Hoadley adhered to the former, as Sherlock did to the latter. Hoadley was no friend to our author: he affected to consider his philosophy and his Bermuda project as the reveries of a visionary. Sherlock (who was afterwards bishop of London), on the other hand, warmly espoused his cause; and particularly, when the Minute Philosopher came out, he carried a copy of it to the queen, and left it to her majesty to determine whether such a work could be the production of a disordered understanding.

After Dean Berkeley's return from Rhode Island, the queen often commanded his attendance to discourse with him on what he had observed worthy of notice in America. His agreeable and instructive conversation engaged that discerning princess so much in his favour, that the rich deanery of Down in Ireland falling vacant, he was at her desire named to it, and the king's letter actually came over for his appointment. But his friend Lord Burlington having neglected to notify the royal intentions in proper time to the duke of Dorset, then lord lieutenant of Ireland, his excellency was so offended at this disposal of the richest deanery in Ireland without his concurrence, that it was thought proper not to press the matter any further. Her majesty upon this declared, that since they would not suffer Dr. Berkeley to be a *dean* in Ireland, he should be a *bishop:* and accordingly, in 1734, the bishopric of Cloyne becoming vacant, he was by letters patent, dated 17th of March, promoted to that see, and was consecrated at St. Paul's church in Dublin, on the 19th of May following, by Theophilus archbishop of Cashel, assisted by the bishops of Raphoe and Killaloe.

His lordship repaired immediately to his manse-house at Cloyne, where he constantly resided (except one winter that he attended the business of parliament in Dublin), and applied himself with vigour to the faithful discharge of all episcopal duties. He revived in his diocese the useful office of rural dean, which had gone into disuse; visited frequently parochially; and confirmed in the several parts of his see.

He continued his studies however with unabated attention, and about this time engaged in a controversy with the mathematicians of Great Britain and Ireland, which made a good deal of noise in the literary world. The occasion was this: Mr. Addison had given the bishop an account of their common friend Dr. Garth's behaviour in his last illness, which was equally unpleasing to both those excellent advocates for revealed religion. For when Mr. Addison went to see the doctor, and began to discourse

with him seriously about preparing for his approaching dissolution, the other made answer, "Surely, Addison, I have good reason not to believe those trifles, since my friend Dr. Halley, who has dealt so much in demonstration, has assured me, that the doctrines of Christianity are incomprehensible, and the religion itself an imposture." The bishop therefore took arms against this redoubtable dealer in demonstration, and addressed *The Analyst* to him, with a view of showing, that mysteries in faith were unjustly objected to by mathematicians, who admitted much greater mysteries, and even falsehoods, in science, of which he endeavoured to prove that the doctrine of fluxions furnished an eminent example. Such an attack upon what had hitherto been looked upon as impregnable produced a number of warm answers, to which the bishop replied once or twice.

From this controversy he turned his thoughts to subjects of more apparent utility; and his *Queries* proposed for the good of Ireland, first printed in 1735, his *Discourse addressed to Magistrates*,* which came out the year following, and his *Maxims concerning Patriotism*, published in 1750, are equally monuments of his knowledge of mankind, and of his zeal for the service of true religion and his country.

In 1745, during the Scots' rebellion, his lordship addressed *A Letter to the Roman Catholics* of his diocese; and in 1749, another to the clergy of that persuasion in Ireland, under the title of *A Word to the Wise*, written with so much candour and moderation as well as good sense, that those gentlemen, highly to their own honour, in the Dublin Journal of the 18th of November, 1749, thought fit to return "their sincere and hearty thanks to the worthy author; assuring him, that they are determined to comply with every particular recommended in his address, to the utmost of their power." They add, that, "in every page it contains a proof of the author's extensive charity; his views are only towards the public good; the means he prescribeth are easily complied with; and his manner of treating persons in their circumstances so very singular, that they plainly show the good man, the polite gentleman, and the true patriot." A character this, which was so entirely his lordship's due, that in the year 1745 that excellent judge of merit, and real friend to Ireland, Lord Chesterfield, as soon as he was advanced to the government, of his own motion wrote to inform him, that the see of Clogher, then vacant, the value of which was double that of Cloyne, was at his service. This offer our bishop, with many expressions of thankfulness, declined. He had enough already to satisfy all his wishes; and agreeably to the natural warmth of

* Occasioned by an impious society called *Blasters*, which this pamphlet put a stop to. He expressed his sentiments on the same occasion in the house of lords, the only time he ever spoke there. The speech was received with much applause.

his temper, he had conceived so high an idea of the beauties of Cloyne, that Mr. Pope had once almost determined to make a visit to Ireland on purpose to see a place, which his friend had painted out to him with all the brilliancy of colouring, and which yet to common eyes presents nothing that is very worthy of attention.

The close of a life thus devoted to the good of mankind was answerable to the beginning of it; the bishop's last years being employed in inquiring into the virtues of a medicine, whereof he had himself experienced the good effects in the relief of a nervous cholic, brought on him by his sedentary course of living, and grown to that height, that, in his own words, "it rendered life a burden to him, the more so, as his pains were exasperated by exercise." This medicine was no other than the celebrated tar-water; his thoughts upon which subject he first communicated to the world in the year 1744, in a treatise entitled *Siris, a Chain of Philosophical Reflections and Inquiries concerning the Virtues of Tar-water.* The author has been heard to declare, that this work cost him more time and pains than any other he had ever been engaged in; a circumstance that will not appear surprising to such as shall give themselves the trouble of examining into the extent of erudition that is there displayed. It is indeed a chain, which, like that of the poet, reaches from earth to heaven, conducting the reader by an almost imperceptible gradation from the phenomena of tar-water, through the depths of the ancient philosophy, to the sublimest mystery of the Christian religion. It underwent a second impression in 1747, and was followed by *Further Thoughts on Tar-water*, published in 1752. This was his last performance for the press, and he survived it but a short time.

In July, 1752, he removed, though in a bad state of health,* with his lady and family to Oxford, in order to superintend the education of one of his sons,† then newly admitted a student at Christ-church. He had taken a fixed resolution to spend the remainder of his days in this city, with a view of indulging the passion for a learned retirement, which had ever strongly possessed his mind, and was one of the motives that led him to form his Bermuda project. But as nobody could be more sensible than

* He was carried from his landing on the English shore in a horse-litter to Oxford.

† This gentleman, George Berkeley, second son of the bishop, proceeded A. M. the 26th of January, 1759, took holy orders, and in August following was presented to the vicarage of Bray in Berkshire. Archbishop Secker, who had a high respect for the father's character, honoured the son with his patronage and friendship, both at the university and afterwards. By his favour Dr. Berkeley became possessed of a canonry of Canterbury, the chancellorship of the collegiate church of Brecknock, and (by exchange for the vicarage of Bray) of the vicarage of Cookham, Berks: to which was added, by the dean and chapter of Canterbury, the vicarage of East Peckham, Kent. He took the degree of LL.D. the 12th of February, 1768. In the year 1760, he married the daughter of the Rev. Mr. Frinsham, rector of White-Waltham, Berks, by which lady he had issue two sons: he died in 1795, and was laid in the same vault with his father.

his lordship of the impropriety of a bishop's non-residence, he previously endeavoured to exchange his high preferment for some canonry or headship at Oxford. Failing of success in this, he actually wrote over to the secretary of state, to request that he might have permission to resign his bishopric, worth at that time at least 1400*l.* per annum. So uncommon a petition excited his majesty's curiosity to inquire who was the extraordinary man that preferred it: being told that it was his old acquaintance Dr. Berkeley, he declared that he should die a bishop in spite of himself, but gave him full liberty to reside where he pleased.

The bishop's last act before he left Cloyne was to sign a lease of the demesne lands in that neighbourhood, to be renewed yearly at the rent of 200*l.*, which sum he directed to be distributed every year, until his return, among poor house-keepers of Cloyne, Youghal, and Aghadda.

At Oxford he lived highly respected by the learned members of that great university, till the hand of Providence unexpectedly deprived them of the pleasure and advantage derived from his residence among them. On Sunday evening the 14th of January 1753, as he was sitting in the midst of his family, listening to a sermon of Dr. Sherlock's, which his lady was reading to him, he was seized with what the physicians termed a palsy in the heart, and instantly expired. The accident was so sudden, that his body was quite cold and his joints stiff, before it was discovered; as the bishop lay on a couch, and seemed to be asleep, till his daughter, on presenting him with a dish of tea, first perceived his insensibility. His remains were interred at Christ-church, Oxford, where there is an elegant marble monument erected to his memory by his lady, who survived him, and had during her marriage brought him three sons and one daughter.

As to his person, he was a handsome man, with a countenance full of meaning and benignity, remarkable for great strength of limbs, and, till his sedentary life impaired it, of a very robust constitution. He was however often troubled with the hypochondria, and latterly with that nervous cholic mentioned above.

At Cloyne he constantly rose between three and four o'clock in the morning, and summoned his family to a lesson on the bass-viol from an Italian master he kept in the house for the instruction of his children; though the bishop himself had no ear for music. He spent the rest of the morning, and often a great part of the day in study: his favourite author, from whom many of his notions were borrowed, was Plato. He had a large and valuable collection of books and pictures, which became the property of his son, the Rev. George Berkeley, LL.D.

The excellence of his moral character, if it were not so conspicuous in his writings, might have been learned from the blessings with which his memory was followed by the numerous

poor* of his neighbourhood, as well as from the testimony of his surviving acquaintance, who could not speak of him without a degree of enthusiasm, that removes the air of hyperbole from the well-known line of his friend Mr. Pope:

To Berkeley every virtue under heaven.

The inscription on his monument was drawn up by Dr. Markham, archbishop of York, then head master of Westminster school, and is in these terms:

Gravissimo præsuli,
Georgio, Episcopo Clonensi:
Viro,
Seu ingenii et eruditionis laudem,
Seu probitatis et beneficentiæ spectemus,
Inter primos omnium ætatum numerando.
Si Christianus fueris,
Si amans patriæ,
Utroque nomine gloriari potes
BERKLEIUM vixisse.
Obiit annum agens septuagesimum tertium: †
Natus Anno Christi M.DC.LXXIX.
Anna Conjux
L.M.P.

* One instance of his attention to his poor neighbours may deserve relating. Cloyne, though it gave name to the see, is in fact no better than a village: it was not reasonable therefore to expect much industry or ingenuity in the inhabitants. Yet whatever article of clothing they could possibly manufacture there, the bishop would have from no other place; and chose to wear ill clothes, and worse wigs, rather than suffer the poor of the town to remain unemployed.

† A mistake, vide pp. 1, 14.

LETTERS,

&c. &c.

LETTER I.

TO MR. THOMAS PRIOR,* PALL-MALL COFFEE HOUSE, LONDON.

Paris, 25th of Nov., 1713, N.S.

DEAR TOM,—From London to Calais I came in the company of a Flamand, a Spaniard, a Frenchman, and three English servants of my lord. The three gentlemen being of those different nations obliged me to speak the French language (which is now familiar), and gave me the opportunity of seeing much of the world in a little compass. After a very remarkable escape from rocks and banks of sand, and darkness and storm, and the hazards that attend rash and ignorant seamen, we arrived at Calais in a vessel, which, returning the next day, was cast away in the harbour in open day-light, as I think I already told you. From Calais Col. Du Hamel left it to my choice either to go with him by post to Paris, or come after in the stage-coach. I

* Thomas Prior, Esq., the gentleman to whom the public is indebted for preserving the greatest part of the following correspondence, was born about the year 1679, at Rathdowney in Queen's County, the estate of his family since the middle of that century. He was educated in the university of Dublin, where he took the degree of A.M., and was fellow student with our author. Being of a weak habit of body, he declined entering into any of the learned professions, though otherwise well qualified to have appeared with advantage in them: the great object of his thoughts and studies was to promote the real happiness of his country. In 1729 he published his well-known tract, a List of the absentees of Ireland, in the close of which he strongly recommended the use of linen scarfs at funerals. The hint was adopted by the executors of Mr. Conolly, speaker of the house of commons, at his public funeral in the month of October of this year; and that mode of burying has been effectually established ever since, to the great emolument of that most capital branch of trade. He published also several tracts relative to Irish coin, linen manufacture, &c. But the glory of his life, and object of his unremitting labours, was the founding and promoting of that most useful institution the Dublin Society, of which for a series of years he discharged the duty of secretary. Every good and great man, his contemporary, honoured him with his esteem and friendship, particularly Philip earl of Chesterfield; of whose interest however his moderation led him to make no other use than to procure, by his lordship's recommendation, from the late king a charter of incorporation for his darling child the Dublin Society, with a grant of 500*l.* per annum for its better support. Having spent his life in the practice of every virtue that distinguishes the patriot and the true Christian, he died of a gradual decline in Dublin on the 21st of October, 1751, and was interred in the church of Rathdowney. Over his remains is a neat monument of Killkenny marble, with an English epitaph: his friends erected a more magnificent memorial of this useful member of society in the nave of Christ-church, Dublin, the inscription on which came from the elegant pen of our bishop, vide Ext. 70, infra, 22nd Dec. 1751. See Views and Descriptions of Dublin by Pool and Cash, 4to, p. 102: also Wright's Ancient and Modern Dublin, p. 115.

chose the latter, and on 1st Nov., O. S., embarked in the stage coach with a company that were all perfect strangers to me. There were two Scotch, and one English gentleman. One of the former happened to be the author of the voyage to St. Kilda and the account of the Western Isles. We were good company on the road, and that day sennight came to Paris. I have been since taken up in viewing churches, convents, palaces, colleges, &c., which are very numerous and magnificent in this town. The splendour and riches of these things surpasses belief; but it were endless to descend to particulars. I was present at a disputation in the Sorbonne, which indeed had much of the French fire in it. I saw the Irish and the English colleges. In the latter I saw, enclosed in a coffin, the body of the late king James. Bits of the coffin and of the cloth that hangs the room have been cut away for relics, he being esteemed a great saint by the people. The day after I came to town I dined at the ambassador of Sicily's, and this day with Mr. Prior. I snatched an opportunity to mention you to him, and do your character justice. To-morrow I intend to visit Father Malebranche, and discourse him on certain points. I have some reasons to decline speaking of the country or villages that I saw as I came along.

My lord is just now arrived, and tells me he has an opportunity of sending my letters to my friends to-morrow morning, which occasions my writing this. My humble service to Sir John Rawdon,* Mrs. Rawdon, Mrs. Kempsey, and all other friends. My lord thinks he shall stay a fortnight here. I am, dear Tom, Your affectionate humble servant, G. B.

LETTER II.

Turin, 6th of Jan. 1714, *N. S.*

Dear Tom,—At Lyons, where I was about eight days, it was left to my choice whether I would go from thence to Toulon, and there embark for Genoa; or else pass through Savoy, cross the Alps, and so through Italy. I chose the latter route, though I was obliged to ride post in company of Col. Du Hamel and Mr. Oglethorpe, adjutant-general of the queen's forces, who were sent with a letter from my lord to the king's mother at Turin. The first day we rode from Lyons to Chambery the capital of Savoy, which is reckoned sixty miles. The Lyonnois and Dauphiné were very well; but Savoy was a perpetual chain of rocks and mountains, almost impassable for ice and snow. And yet I rode post through it, and came off with only four falls, from which I received no other damage, than the breaking my sword, my watch, and my snuff-box. On new year's day we passed mount Cenis,

* Father of the first Earl of Moira, and ancestor of the Marquises of Hastings.

one of the most difficult and formidable parts of the Alps which is ever passed over by mortal men. We were carried in open chairs by men used to scale these rocks and precipices, which at this season are more slippery and dangerous than at other times, and at the best are high, craggy, and steep enough to cause the heart of the most valiant man to melt within him. My life often depended on a single step. No one will think that I exaggerate, who considers what it is to pass the Alps on new year's day. But I shall leave particulars to be recited by the fire's side.

We have been now five days here, and in two or three more design to set forward towards Genoa, where we are to join my lord, who embarked at Toulon. I am now hardened against wind and weather, earth and sea, frost and snow; can gallop all day long, and sleep but three or four hours at night.

The court here is polite and splendid, the city beautiful, the churches and colleges magnificent, but not much learning stirring among them. However all orders of people, clergy and laity, are wonderfully civil; and every where a man finds his account in being an Englishman, that character alone being sufficient to gain respect. My service to all friends, particularly to Sir John and Mrs. Rawdon, and Mrs. Kempsy. It is my advice that they do not pass the Alps in their way to Sicily.

I am, dear Tom, yours, &c., G. B.

LETTER III.

Leghorn, 26th of Feb. 1714, N. S.

Dear Tom,—Mrs. Rawdon is too thin, and Sir John too fat, to agree with the English climate; I advise them to make haste, and transport themselves into this warm, clear air. Your best way is to come through France; but make no long stay there, for the air is too cold, and there are instances enough of poverty and distress to spoil the mirth of any one who feels the sufferings of his fellow creatures. I would prescribe you two or three operas at Paris, and as many days' amusement at Versailles. My next recipe shall be to ride post from Paris to Toulon, and there to embark for Genoa. For I would by no means have you shaken to pieces, as I was, riding post over the rocks of Savoy, or put out of humour by the most horrible precipices of mount Cenis, that part of the Alps which divides Piedmont from Savoy. I shall not anticipate your pleasure by any description of Italy or France. Only, with regard to the latter, I cannot help observing, that the Jacobites have little to hope, and others little to fear, from that reduced nation. The king indeed looks as though he wanted neither meat nor drink, and his palaces are in good repair; but throughout the land there is a different face of things.

I stayed about a month at Paris, eight days at Lyons, eleven at Turin, three weeks at Genoa, and am now here about a fortnight, with my lord's secretary (an Italian), and some others of his retinue; my lord having gone aboard a Maltese vessel from hence to Sicily with a couple of servants. He designs to stay there incognito a few days, and then return hither; having put off his public entry till the yacht with his equipage arrives.

I have writ to you several times before by post; in answer to all my letters I desire you to send me one great one, close writ and filled on all sides, containing a particular account of all transactions in London and Dublin. Enclose it in a cover to my lord ambassador, and that again in another cover to Mr. Hare at my lord Bolingbroke's office. If you have a mind to travel only in the map, here is the list of all the places where I lodged since my leaving England, in their natural order; Calais, Boulogne, Montreuil, Abbeville, Pois, Beauvais, Paris, Moret, Villeneuve-le-roi, Vermanton, Saulieu, Chany, Macon, Lyons, Chambery, St. Jean de Maurienne, Lanebourg, Susa, Turin, Alexandria, Campo-Marone, Genoa, Sestri di Levante, Lerici, Leghorn. My humble service to Sir John, Mrs. Rawdon, and Mrs. Kempsy, Mr. Digby, Mr. French, &c.

I am, dear Tom, Your affectionate humble servant, G. B.

LETTER IV.

TO MR. POPE.

Leghorn, 1st of May, 1714.

As I take ingratitude to be a greater crime than impertinence, I choose rather to run the risk of being thought guilty of the latter, than not to return you my thanks for a very agreeable entertainment you just now gave me. I have accidentally met with your Rape of the Lock here, having never seen it before. Style, painting, judgment, spirit, I had already admired in other of your writings; but in this I am charmed with the magic of your invention, with all those images, allusions, and inexplicable beauties, which you raise so surprisingly, and at the same time so naturally, out of a trifle. And yet I cannot say that I was more pleased with the reading of it, than I am with the pretext it gives me to renew in your thoughts the remembrance of one who values no happiness beyond the friendship of men of wit, learning, and good-nature.

I remember to have heard you mention some half-formed design of coming to Italy. What might we not expect from a muse that sings so well in the bleak climate of England, if she felt the same warm sun, and breathed the same air with Virgil and Horace!

There are here an incredible number of poets that have all the inclination, but want the genius, or perhaps the art of the ancients. Some among them, who understand English, begin to relish our authors; and I am informed that at Florence they have translated Milton into Italian verse. If one who knows so well how to write like the old Latin poets came among them, it would probably be a means to retrieve them from their cold trivial conceits, to an imitation of their predecessors.

As merchants, antiquaries, men of pleasure, &c., have all different views in travelling, I know not whether it might not be worth a poet's while to travel, in order to store his mind with strong images of nature.

Green fields and groves, flowery meadows and purling streams, are no where in such perfection as in England; but if you would know lightsome days, warm suns, and blue skies, you must come to Italy; and to enable a man to describe rocks and precipices, it is absolutely necessary that he pass the Alps.

You will easily perceive that it is self-interest makes me so fond of giving advice to one who has no need of it. If you came into the parts, I should fly to see you. I am here (by the favour of my good friend the dean of St. Patrick's) * in quality of chaplain to the earl of Peterborough, who about three months since left the greatest part of his family in this town. God knows how long we shall stay here. I am, your, &c.

LETTER V.

Naples, 22nd of Oct., 1717, N.S.

I HAVE long had it in my thoughts to trouble you with a letter, but was discouraged for want of something that I could think worth sending fifteen hundred miles. Italy is such an exhausted subject, that I dare say you would easily forgive my saying nothing of it; and the imagination of a poet is a thing so nice and delicate, that it is no easy matter to find out images capable of giving pleasure to one of the few who (in any age) have come up to that character. I am nevertheless lately returned from an island, where I passed three or four months; which, were it set out in its true colours, might, methinks, amuse you agreeably enough for a minute or two. The island Inarime is an epitome of the whole earth, containing within the compass of eighteen miles a wonderful variety of hills, vales, ragged rocks, fruitful plains, and barren mountains, all thrown together in a most romantic confusion. The air is in the hottest season constantly refreshed by cool breezes from the sea. The vales produce excellent wheat and Indian corn, but are mostly covered with

* Dr. Jonathan Swift.

vineyards, intermixed with fruit-trees: besides the common kinds, as cherries, apricots, peaches, &c., they produce oranges, limes, almonds, pomegranates, figs, water-melons, and many other fruits unknown to our climates, which lie every where open to the passenger. The hills are the greater part covered to the top with vines, some with chestnut groves, and others with thickets of myrtle and lentiscus. The fields in the northern side are divided by hedge-rows of myrtle. Several fountains and rivulets add to the beauty of this landscape, which is likewise set off by the variety of some barren spots and naked rocks. But that which crowns the scene is a large mountain, rising out of the middle of the island (once a terrible volcano, by the ancients called Mons Epomeus): its lower parts are adorned with vines and other fruits; the middle affords pasture to flocks of goats and sheep; and the top is a sandy pointed rock, from which you have the finest prospect in the world, surveying at one view, besides several pleasant islands lying at your feet, a tract of Italy about three hundred miles in length, from the promontory of Antium to the cape of Palinurus: the greater part of which hath been sung by Homer and Virgil, as making a considerable part of the travels and adventures of their two heroes. The islands Caprea, Prochyta, and Parthenope, together with Cajeta, Cumæ, Monte Miseno, the habitations of Circe, the Syrens, and the Læstrigones, the bay of Naples, the promontory of Minerva, and the whole Campagna Felice, make but a part of this noble landscape; which would demand an imagination as warm, and numbers as flowing as your own, to describe it. The inhabitants of this delicious isle, as they are without riches and honours, so they are without the vices and follies that attend them; and were they but as much strangers to revenge, as they are to avarice and ambition, they might in fact answer the poetical notions of the golden age. But they have got, as an alloy to their happiness, an ill habit of murdering one another on slight offences. We had an instance of this the second night after our arrival, a youth of eighteen being shot dead by our door: and yet, by the sole secret of minding our own business, we found a means of living securely among these dangerous people.

Would you know how we pass the time at Naples? Our chief entertainment is the devotion of our neighbours: besides the gaiety of their churches (where folks go to see what they call *una bella devotione*, i. e., a sort of religious opera), they make fire-works almost every week out of devotion; the streets are often hung with arras out of devotion; and (what is still more strange) the ladies invite gentlemen to their houses, and treat them with music and sweetmeats, out of devotion: in a word, were it not for this devotion of its inhabitants, Naples would have little else to recommend it besides the air and situa-

tion. Learning is in no very thriving state here, as indeed no where else in Italy: however, among many pretenders some men of taste are to be met with. A friend of mine told me not long since, that being to visit Salvini at Florence, he found him reading your Homer: he liked the notes extremely, and could find no other fault with the version, but that he thought it approached too near a paraphrase; which shows him not to be sufficiently acquainted with our language. I wish you health to go on with that noble work; and when you have that I need not wish you success. You will do me the justice to believe, that whatever relates to your welfare is sincerely wished by

Your, &c.

LETTER VI.

TO DR. ARBUTHNOT.

17th of April, 1717.

WITH much difficulty I reached the top of mount Vesuvius, in which I saw a vast aperture full of smoke, which hindered the seeing its depth and figure. I heard within that horrid gulf certain odd sounds, which seemed to proceed from the belly of the mountain; a sort of murmuring, sighing, throbbing, churning, dashing, as it were, of waves, and between whiles a noise like that of thunder or cannon, which was constantly attended with a clattering like that of tiles falling from the tops of houses on the streets. Sometimes as the wind changed, the smoke grew thinner, discovering a very ruddy flame, and the jaws of the pan or crater streaked with red and several shades of yellow. After an hour's stay the smoke, being moved by the wind, gave us short and partial prospects of the great hollow, in the flat bottom of which I could discern two furnaces almost contiguous: that on the left, seeming about three yards in diameter, glowed with red flame, and threw up red-hot stones with a hideous noise, which, as they fell back, caused the forementioned clattering. 8th of May, in the morning, I ascended to the top of Vesuvius a second time, and found a different face of things. The smoke ascending upright gave a full prospect of the crater, which, as I could judge, is about a mile in circumference, and a hundred yards deep. A conical mount had been formed since my last visit, in the middle of the bottom: this mount, I could see, was made of the stones thrown up and fallen back again into the crater. In this new hill remained the two mounts or furnaces already mentioned: that on our left was in the vertex of the hill which it had formed round it, and raged more violently than before, throwing up every three or four minutes, with a dreadful bellowing, a vast number of red-hot stones, sometimes in appearance

above a thousand, and at least three thousand feet higher than my head as I stood upon the brink: but there being little or no wind, they fell back perpendicularly into the crater, increasing the conical hill. The other mouth to the right was lower in the side of the same new formed hill: I could discern it to be filled with red-hot liquid matter, like that in the furnace of a glass-house, which raged and wrought as the waves of the sea, causing a short, abrupt noise like what may be imagined to proceed from a sea of quicksilver dashing among uneven rocks. This stuff would sometimes spew over and run down the convex side of the conical hill; and appearing at first red-hot it changed colour, and hardened as it cooled, showing the first rudiments of an eruption, or, if I may say so, an eruption in miniature. Had the wind driven in our faces, we had been in no small danger of stifling by the sulphureous smoke, or being knocked on the head by lumps of molten minerals, which we saw had sometimes fallen on the brink of the crater, upon those shots from the gulf at bottom. But as the wind was favourable, I had an opportunity to survey this odd scene for above an hour and a half together; during which it was very observable, that all the volleys of smoke, flame, and burning stones, come only out of the hole to our left, while the liquid stuff in the other mouth wrought and overflowed, as hath been already described. 5th of June, after a horrid noise, the mountain was seen at Naples to spew a little out of the crater. The same continued the 6th. The 7th, nothing was observed till within two hours of night, when it began a hideous bellowing, which continued all that night and the next day till noon, causing the windows, and, as some affirm, the very houses in Naples to shake. From that time it spewed vast quantities of molten stuff to the south, which streamed down the side of the mountain like a great pot boiling over. This evening I returned from a voyage through Apulia, and was surprised, passing by the north side of the mountain, to see a great quantity of ruddy smoke lie along a huge tract of sky over the river of molten stuff, which was itself out of sight. The 9th, Vesuvius raged less violently: that night we saw from Naples a column of fire shoot between whiles out of its summit. The 10th, when we thought all would have been over, the mountain grew very outrageous again, roaring and groaning most dreadfully. You cannot form a juster idea of this noise in the most violent fits of it, than by imagining a mixed sound made up of the raging of a tempest, the murmur of a troubled sea, and the roaring of thunder and artillery, confused all together. It was very terrible as we heard it in the further end of Naples, at the distance of above twelve miles: this moved my curiosity to approach the mountain. Three or four of us got into a boat, and were set ashore at Torre del Greco, a town situate at the

foot of Vesuvius to the south-west, whence we rode four or five miles before we came to the burning river, which was about midnight. The roaring of the volcano grew exceeding loud and horrible as we approached. I observed a mixture of colours in the cloud over the crater, green, yellow, red, and blue; there was likewise a ruddy, dismal light in the air over that tract of land where the burning river flowed; ashes continually showered on us all the way from the sea-coast: all which circumstances, set off and augmented by the horror and silence of the night, made a scene the most uncommon and astonishing I ever saw, which grew still more extraordinary as we came nearer the stream. Imagine a vast torrent of liquid fire rolling from the top down the side of the mountain, and with irresistible fury bearing down and consuming vines, olives, fig-trees, houses; in a word every thing that stood in its way. This mighty flood divided into different channels, according to the inequalities of the mountain: the largest stream seemed half a mile broad at least, and five miles long. The nature and consistence of these burning torrents hath been described with so much exactness and truth by Borellus, in his Latin treatise of mount Ætna, that I need say nothing of it. I walked so far before my companions up the mountain, along the side of the river of fire, that I was obliged to retire in great haste, the sulphureous steam having surprised me, and almost taken away my breath. During our return, which was about three o'clock in the morning, we constantly heard the murmur and groaning of the mountain, which between whiles would burst out into louder peals, throwing up huge spouts of fire and burning stones, which falling down again, resembled the stars in our rockets. Sometimes I observed two, at others three distinct columes of flames; and sometimes one vast one that seemed to fill the whole crater. These burning columns and the fiery stones seemed to be shot a thousand feet perpendicular above the summit of the volcano. The 11th, at night, I observed it, from a terrace in Naples, to throw up incessantly a vast body of fire, and great stones to a surprising height. The 12th, in the morning, it darkened the sun with ashes and smoke, causing a sort of eclipse. Horrid bellowings, this and the foregoing day, were heard at Naples, whither part of the ashes also reached: at night I observed it throwing up flame, as on the 11th. On the 13th, the wind changing, we saw a pillar of black smoke shot upright to a prodigious height: at night I observed the mount cast up fire as before, though not so distinctly because of the smoke. The 14th, a thick black cloud hid the mountain from Naples. The 15th, in the morning, the court and walls of our house were covered with ashes. The 16th, the smoke was driven by a westerly wind from the town to the opposite side of the mountain. The 17th, the smoke appeared much diminished,

fat and greasy. The 18th, the whole appearance ended; the mountain remaining perfectly quiet without any visible smoke or flame. A gentleman of my acquaintance, whose window looked towards Vesuvius, assured me that he observed several flashes, as it were of lightning, issue out of the mouth of the volcano. It is not worth while to trouble you with the conjectures* I have formed concerning the cause of these phenomena, from what I observed in the Lacus Amsancti, the Solfatara, &c., as well as in mount Vesuvius. One thing I may venture to say, that I saw the fluid matter rise out of the centre of the bottom of the crater, out of the very middle of the mountain, contrary to what Borellus imagines, whose method of explaining the eruption of a volcano by an inflexed syphon and the rules of hydrostatics, is likewise inconsistent with the torrent's flowing down from the very vertex of the mountain. I have not seen the crater since the eruption, but design to visit it again before I leave Naples. I doubt there is nothing in this worth showing the Society: as to that, you will use your discretion. E. (it should be G.) BERKELEY.

The following extracts from letters to Mr. Thomas Prior, of Dublin, it is hoped, will not be unacceptable to the reader, as they serve to mark the progress of the Bermuda project, and of the author's hopes and fears on that interesting occasion.

Ex. 1. *London, 8th of Dec.* 1724. Dear Tom,—You wrote to me something or other which I received a fortnight ago, about temporal affairs, which I have no leisure to think of at present. The lord chancellor is not a busier man than myself; and I thank God my pains are not without success, which hitherto hath answered beyond expectation. Doubtless the English are a nation *très éclairée.* Let me know whether you have wrote to Mr. Newman whatever you judged might give him a good opinion of our project. Let me also know where Bermuda Jones lives, or where he is to be met with.

Ex. 2. *20th of April,* 1725. Pray give my service to Caldwell, and let him know that in case he goes abroad with Mr. Stewart, Jaques, who lived with Mr. Ashe, is desirous to attend upon him. I have obtained reports from the bishop of London, the board of trade and plantations, and the attorney and solicitor-general, in favour of the Bermuda scheme, and hope to have the warrant signed by his majesty this week.

* Our author's conjectures on the cause of the phenomena above mentioned do not appear in any of his writings; but he has often communicated them in conversation to his friends. He observed, that all the remarkable volcanos in the world were near the sea. It was his opinion, therefore, that a vacuum being made in the bowels of the earth by a vast body of inflammable matter taking fire, the water rushed in, and was converted into steam: which simple cause was sufficient to produce all the wonderful effects of volcanos; as appears from Savery's fire engine for raising water, and from the æolipile.

Ex. 3. *3rd of June*, 1725. Yesterday the charter passed the privy seal. This day the new chancellor began his office by putting the recipe to it.

Ex. 4. *12th of June*, 1725. The charter hath passed all the seals, and is now in my custody. It hath cost me 130*l.* dry fees, beside expedition money to men in office.

Ex. 5. *3rd of Sept.*, 1725. I wrote long since to Caldwell about his going to Bermuda, but had no answer; which makes me think my letter miscarried. I must now desire you to give my service to him, and know whether he still retains the thoughts he once seemed to have of entering into that design. I know he hath since got an employment, &c., but I have good reason to think he would not suffer in his temporalities by taking one of our fellowships, although he resigned all that. In plain English, I have good assurance that our college will be endowed beyond any thing expected or desired hitherto. This makes me confident he would lose nothing by the change, and on this supposition only I propose it to him. I wish he may judge rightly in this matter, as well for his own sake as for the sake of the college.

Ex. 6. *27th of Jan.*, 1726. I must once more entreat you, for the sake of old friendship, to pluck up a vigorous, active spirit, and disencumber me of the affairs relating to the inheritance, by putting one way or other a final issue to them. I thank God I find in matters of a more difficult nature good effects of activity and resolution. I mean Bermuda, with which my hands are full, and which is in a fair way to thrive and flourish in spite of all opposition.

Ex. 7. *6th of Feb.*, 1726. I am in a fair way of having a very noble endowment for the college of Bermuda, though the late meeting of parliament and the preparations of a fleet, &c., will delay the finishing things which depend in some measure on the parliament, and to which I have gained the consent of the government, and indeed of which I make no doubt; but only the delay, it is to be feared, will make it impossible for me to set out this spring. One good effect of this, I hope, may be, that you will have disembarrassed yourself of all sort of business that may detain you here, and so be ready to go with us: in which case I may have somewhat to propose to you, that I believe is of a kind agreeable to your inclinations, and may be of considerable advantage to you. But you must say nothing of this to any one, nor of any one thing that I have now hinted concerning endowment, delay, going, &c. I have heard lately from Caldwell, who wrote to me on an affair in which it will not be in my power to do him any service. I answered his letter, and mentioned somewhat about Bermuda, with an overture for his being fellow there. I desire you would discourse him, as from yourself, on that subject, and let me know his thoughts and dispositions towards engaging in that design.

Ex. 8. 15*th of March*, 1726. I had once thought I should be able to have set out for Bermuda this season. But his majesty's long stay abroad, the late meeting of parliament, and the present posture of foreign affairs taking up the thoughts both of ministers and parliament, have postponed the settling of certain lands in St. Christopher's on our college, so as to render the said thoughts abortive. I have now my hands full of that business, and hope to see it soon settled to my wish. In the mean time, my attendance on this business renders it impossible for me to mind my private affairs. Your assistance therefore in them will not only be a kind service to me, but also to the public weal of our college, which would very much suffer if I were obliged to leave this kingdom before I saw an endowment settled on it. For this reason I must depend upon you.

Ex. 9. 19*th of April*, 1726. Last Saturday I sent you the instrument empowering you to set my deanery. It is at present my opinion that matter had better be deferred till the charter of St. Paul's college hath got through the house of commons, who are now considering it. In ten days at furthest I hope to let you know the event hereof, which, as it possibly may affect some circumstance in the farming my said deanery, is the occasion of giving you this trouble for the present, when I am in the greatest hurry of business I ever knew in my life, and have only time to add that I am, &c.

Ex. 10. 12*th of May*, 1726. After six weeks' struggle against an earnest opposition from different interests and motives, I have yesterday carried my point just as I desired in the house of commons by an extraordinary majority, none having the confidence to speak against it, and not above two giving their negatives, which was done in so low a voice as if they themselves were ashamed of it. They were both considerable men in stocks in trade, and in the city: and in truth I have had more opposition from that sort of men, and from the governors and traders to America, than from any others. But God be praised, there is an end of all their narrow and mercantile views and endeavours, as well as of the jealousies and suspicions of others (some whereof were very great men), who apprehended this college may produce an independency in America, or at least lessen its dependency upon England. Now I must tell you that you have nothing to do but go on with farming my deanery, &c., according to the tenor of my former letter, which I suspended by a subsequent one till I should see the event of yesterday.

Ex. 11. 4*th of Aug.*, 1726. You mentioned a friend of Synge's, who was desirous to be one of our fellows. Pray let me know who he is, and the particulars of his character. There are many competitors more than vacancies, and the fellowships are likely to be very good ones: so I would willingly see them well bestowed.

Ex. 12. 1*st of Dec.*, 1726. Bermuda is now on a better and surer foot than ever. After the address of the commons and his majesty's most gracious answer, one would have thought all difficulties had been over. But much opposition hath been since raised (and that by very great men) to the design. As for the obstacles thrown in my way by interested men, though there hath been much of that, I never regarded it, no more than the clamours and calumnies of ignorant, mistaken people: but in good truth it was with much difficulty, and the peculiar blessing of God, that the point was carried, maugre the strong opposition in the cabinet council; wherein nevertheless it hath of late been determined to go on with the grant pursuant to the address of the house of commons, and to give it all possible despatch. Accordingly his majesty had ordered the warrant for passing the said grant to be drawn. The persons appointed to contrive the draught of the warrant are the solicitor-general, Baron Scroop of the treasury, and my very good friend Mr. Hutcheson. You must know that in July last the lords of the treasury had named commissioners for taking an estimate of the value and quantity of the crown lands in St. Christopher's, and for receiving proposals either for selling or farming the same for the benefit of the public. Their report is not yet made; and the treasury were of opinion they could not make a grant to us till such time as the whole were sold or farmed pursuant to such report. But the point I am now labouring is, to have it done without delay. And how this may be done without embarrassing the treasury in their after disposal of the whole lands, was this day the subject of a conference between the solicitor-general, Mr. Hutcheson, and myself. The method agreed on is, by a rent charge on the whole crown lands, redeemable on the crown's paying twenty thousand pounds for the use of the president and fellows of St. Paul's and their successors. Sir Robert Walpole hath signified that he hath no objection to this method; and I doubt not Baron Scroop will agree to it: by which means the grant may be passed before the meeting of parliament; after which we may prepare to set out on our voyage in April. I have unawares run into this long account, because you desired to know how the affair of Bermuda stood at present.

Ex. 13. 27*th of Feb.*, 1727. My going to Bermuda I cannot positively say when it will be. I have to do with very busy people at a very busy time. I hope nevertheless to have all that business completely finished in a few weeks.

Ex. 14. 11*th of April*, 1727. Now I mention my coming to Ireland, I must earnestly desire you by all means to keep this a secret from every individual creature. I cannot justly say what time (probably some time next month) I shall be there, or how long; but find it necessary to be there to transact matters with

one or two of my associates, whom yet I would not have know of my coming till I am on the spot; and for several reasons am determined to keep myself as secret and concealed as possible all the time I am in Ireland. In order to this I make it my request that you will hire for me an entire house, as neat and convenient as you can get, somewhere within a mile of Dublin, for half a year. But what I principally desire is, that it be in no town or village, but in some quiet private place out of the way of roads or street or observation. I would have it hired with necessary furniture for kitchen, a couple of chambers, and a parlour. At the same time I must desire you to hire an honest maid-servant who can keep it clean, and dress a plain bit of meat: a man-servant I shall bring with me. You may do all this either in your own name, or as for a friend of yours, one Mr. Brown (for that is the name I shall assume), and let me know it as soon as possible. There are several little scattered houses with gardens about Clontarf, Rathfarnham, &c. I remember particularly the old castle of Rathmines, and a little white house upon the hills by itself beyond the old men's hospital; likewise in the out-goings or fields about St. Kevin's, &c. In short, in any snug private place within half a mile or a mile of town. I would have a bit of a garden to it, no matter what sort. Mind this, and you will oblige yours.

Ex. 15. 20*th of May*, 1727. I would by all means have a place secured for me by the end of June: it may be taken only for three months. I am, God be praised, very near concluding the crown grant to our college, having got over all difficulties and obstructions, which were not a few. I conclude in great haste, yours.

Ex. 16. 13*th of June*, 1727. Poor Caldwell's death I had heard of two or three posts before I received your letters. Had he lived, his life would not have been agreeable. He was formed for retreat and study, but of late was grown fond of the world and getting into business. A house between Dublin and Drumcondra I can by no means approve of: the situation is too public, and what I chiefly regard is privacy. I like the situation of Lord's house much better, and have only one objection to it, which is your saying he intends to use some part of it himself: for this would be inconsistent with my view of being quite concealed, and the more so because Lord knows me, which of all things is what I would avoid. His house and price would suit me. If you can get such another quite to myself, snug, private, and clean, with a stable, I shall not matter whether it be painted or no, or how it is furnished, provided it be clean and warm. I aim at nothing magnificent or grand (as you term it), which might probably defeat my purpose of continuing concealed.

Ex. 17. 15*th of June*, 1727. Yesterday we had an account

of king George's death. This day king George II. was proclaimed. All the world here are in a hurry, and I as much as any body, our grant being defeated by the king's dying before the broad seal was annexed to it, in order to which it was passing through the offices. I have *la mer à boire* again. You shall hear from me when I know more. At present I am at a loss what course to take.

Ex. 17. *27th of June*, 1727. In a former letter I gave you to know, that my affairs were unravelled by the death of his majesty. I am now beginning on a new foot, and with good hopes of success. The warrant for our grant had been signed by the king, countersigned by the lords of the treasury, and passed the attorney-general: here it stood, when the express came of the king's death. A new warrant is now preparing, which must be signed by his present majesty in order to a patent's passing the broad seal. As soon as this affair is finished, I propose going to Ireland.

Ex. 18. *6th of July*, 1727. I have obtained a new warrant for a grant, signed by his present majesty, contrary to the expectations of my friends, who thought nothing could be expected of that kind in this great hurry of business. As soon as this grant, which is of the same import with that begun by his late majesty, hath passed the offices and seals, I propose to execute my design of going to Ireland.

Ex. 19. *21st of July*, 1727. My grant is now got further than where it was at the time of the king's death. I am in hopes the broad seal will soon be put to it, what remains to be done in order thereto being only matter of form: so that I propose setting out from hence in a fortnight's time. When I set out, I shall write at the same time to tell you of it. I know not whether I shall stay longer than a month on that side of the water: I am sure I shall not want the country lodging, I desired you to procure, for a longer time. Do not therefore take it for more than a month, if that can be done. I remember certain remote suburbs called Pimlico and Dolphin's barn, but know not whereabout they lie. If either of them be situate in a private, pleasant place, and airy, near the fields, I should therein like a first floor in a clean house (I desire no more); and it would be better if there was a bit of a garden where I had the liberty to walk. This I mention in case my former desire cannot be conveniently answered for so short a time as a month; and if I may judge at this distance, those places seem as private as a house in the country. For you must know, what I chiefly aim at is secresy. This makes me uneasy to find that there hath been a report spread among some of my friends in Dublin of my designing to go over. I cannot account for this, believing, after the precautions I had given you, that you would not mention it, directly or indirectly, to any mortal.

Ex. 20. *20th of Feb.*, 1728. I need not repeat to you what I told you here of the necessity there is for my raising all the money possible against my voyage, which, God willing, I shall begin in May, whatever you may hear suggested to the contrary; though you need not mention this. I propose to set out for Dublin about a month hence: but of this you must not give the least intimation to any body. I beg the favour of you to look out at leisure a convenient lodging for me in or about Church-street, or such other place as you shall think the most retired—I do not design to be known when I am in Ireland.

Ex. 21. *6th of April*, 1728. I have been detained from my journey partly in expectation of Dr. Clayton's coming, who was doing business in Lancashire, and partly in respect to the excessive rains. The doctor hath been several days in town, and we have had so much rain that probably it will be soon over. I am therefore daily expecting to set out, all things being provided. Now it is of all things my earnest desire (and for very good reasons) not to have it known that I am in Dublin. Speak not therefore one syllable of it to any mortal whatsoever. When I formerly desired you to take a place for me near the town, you gave out that you were looking for a retired lodging for a friend of yours; upon which every body surmised me to be the person. I must beg you not to act in the like manner now, but to take for me an entire house in your own name, and as for yourself; for, all things considered, I am determined upon a whole house, with no mortal in it but a maid of your own putting, who is to look on herself as your servant. Let there be two bedchambers, one for you, another for me; and as you like you may ever and anon lie there. I would have the house with necessary furniture taken by the month (or otherwise, as you can), for I purpose staying not beyond that time: and yet perhaps I may. Take it as soon as possible, and never think of saving a week's hire by leaving it to do when I am there. Dr. Clayton thinks (and I am of the same opinion) that a convenient place may be found in the further end of Great Britain-street, or Ballibough-bridge—by all means beyond Thomson's, the fellow's. Let me entreat you to say nothing of this to any body, but to do the thing directly. In this affair I consider convenience more than expense, and would of all things (cost what it will) have a proper place in a retired situation, where I may have access to fields and sweet air, provided against the moment I arrive. I am inclined to think, one may be better concealed in the outermost skirt of the suburbs than in the country, or within the town. Wherefore if you cannot be accommodated where I mention, inquire in some other skirt or remote suburb. A house quite detached in the country I should have no objection to, provided you judge that I shall not be liable to discovery in it. The place called Bermuda

I am utterly against. Dear Tom, do this matter cleanly and cleverly, without waiting for further advice. You see I am willing to run the risk of the expense. To the person from whom you hire it (whom alone I would have you speak of it to) it will not seem strange you should at this time of the year be desirous for your own convenience or health to have a place in a free and open air. If you cannot get a house without taking it for a longer time than a month, take it at such the shortest time it can be let for, with agreement for further continuing in case there be occasion.—Mr. Madden, who witnesses the letter of attorney, is now going to Ireland. He is a clergyman, and man of estate in the north of Ireland.

Ex. 22. *Gravesend, 5th of September*, 1728. To-morrow, with God's blessing, I set sail for Rhode Island, with my wife and a friend of hers, my lady Hancock's daughter, who bears us company. I am married since I saw you to Miss Forster, daughter of the late chief justice, whose humour and turn of mind pleases me beyond any thing I knew in her whole sex. Mr. James, Mr. Dalton, and Mr. Smilert, go with us on this voyage: we are now all together at Gravesend, and engaged in one view. When my next rents are paid, I must desire you to inquire for my cousin, Richard Berkeley,* who was bred a public notary (I suppose he may, by that time, be out of his apprenticeship), and give him twenty moidores as a present from me, towards helping him on his beginning the world. I believe I shall have occasion for 600*l.* English before this year's income is paid by the farmers of my deanery. I must therefore desire you to speak to Messrs. Swift, &c., to give me credit for said sum in London about three months hence, in case I have occasion to draw for it, and I shall willingly pay their customary interest for the same till the farmers pay it to them, which I hope you will order punctually to be done by the first of June. Direct for me in Rhode Island, and enclose your letter in a cover to Thomas Corbet, Esq., at the admiralty office in London, who will always forward my letters by the first opportunity. Adieu: I write in great haste. A copy of my charter was sent to Dr. Ward by Dr. Clayton: if it be not arrived when you go to London, write out of the charter the clause relating to my absence. Adieu once more.

Ex. 23. *Newport, in Rhode Island, 24th of April*, 1729. I can by this time say something to you, from my own experience, of

* This act of goodness to a poor relation being a matter altogether of a private nature, the editor was not sure whether he ought to have communicated it to the public. Certainly it is not given as an uncommon feature in our author's character, that he should be liberal to his relations: his letters furnish many proofs of his generosity. But the reader will be pleased to recollect the time when this young man's wants were attended to—the whole soul of the Bermuda projector on the stretch to attain, what after so many obstructions seemed at last to be within his grasp.

this place and people. The inhabitants are of a mixed kind, consisting of many sects and subdivisions of sects. Here are four sorts of anabaptists, besides presbyterians, quakers, independents, and many of no profession at all. Notwithstanding so many differences, here are fewer quarrels about religion than elsewhere, the people living peaceably with their neighbours of whatsoever persuasion. They all agree in one point, that the church of England is the second best. The climate is like that of Italy, and not at all colder in the winter than I have known it every where north of Rome. The spring is late: but to make amends, they assure me the autumns are the finest and longest in the world; and the summers are much pleasanter than those of Italy by all accounts, forasmuch as the grass continues green, which it doth not there. This island is pleasantly laid out in hills, and vales, and rising grounds; hath plenty of excellent springs and fine rivulets, and many delightful landscapes of rocks, and promontories, and adjacent lands. The provisions are very good; so are the fruits, which are quite neglected, though vines sprout up of themselves to an extraordinary size, and seem as natural to this soil as to any I ever saw. The town of Newport contains about six thousand souls, and is the most thriving, flourishing place in all America for its bigness. It is very pretty, and pleasantly situated. I was never more agreeably surprised than at the first sight of the town and its harbour. I could give you some hints that may be of use to you, if you were disposed to take advice: but of all men in the world I never found encouragement to give you any.—I have heard nothing from you or any of my friends in England or Ireland, which makes me suspect my letters were in one of the vessels that were wrecked. I write in great haste, and have no time to say a word to my brother Robin: let him know we are in good health. Take care that my draughts are duly honoured, which is of the greatest importance to my credit here; and if I can serve you in these parts, you may command yours, &c.

Ex. 24. *Newport in Rhode Island, 12th of June,* 1729. Being informed that an inhabitant of this country is on the point of going for Ireland, I would not omit writing to you. The winter, it must be allowed, was much sharper than the usual winters in Ireland, but not at all sharper than I have known them in Italy. To make amends, the summer is exceeding delightful; and if the spring begins late, the autumn ends proportionably later than with you, and is said to be the finest in the world. I snatch this moment to write, and have time only to add, that I have got a son, who, I thank God, is likely to live.—I find it hath been reported in Ireland, that we purpose settling here: I must desire you to discountenance any such report. The truth is, if the king's bounty were paid in, and the charter could be

removed hither, I should like it better than Bermuda. But if this were mentioned before the payment of said money, it might perhaps hinder it, and defeat all our designs. As to what you say of Hamilton's proposal, I can only answer at present by a question, viz., whether it be possible for me, in my absence, to be put in possession of the deanery of Dromore? Desire him to make that point clear, and you shall hear further from me.

Ex. 25. *Rhode Island, 9th of March,* 1730. My situation hath been so uncertain, and is like to continue so till I am clear about the receipt of his majesty's bounty, and in consequence thereof, of the determination of my associates, that you are not to wonder at my having given no categorical answer to the proposal you made in relation to Hamilton's deanery, which his death hath put an end to. If I had returned, I should perhaps have been under some temptation to have changed. But as my design still continues to wait the event, and go to Bermuda as soon as I can get associates and money, which my friends are now soliciting in London, I shall in such case persist in my first resolution, of not holding any deanery beyond the limited time. —I live here upon land that I have purchased, and in a farm-house that I have built in this island: it is fit for cows and sheep, and may be of good use in supplying our college at Bermuda. (Among my delays and disappointments I thank God I have two domestic comforts that are very agreeable, my wife and my little son, both which exceed my expectations, and fully answer all my wishes.)—Messrs. James, Dalton, and Smilert, &c., are at Boston, and have been there these four months. My wife and I abide by Rhode Island, preferring quiet and solitude to the noise of a great town, notwithstanding all the solicitations that have been used to draw us thither.—I have desired Mac Manus, in a letter to Dr. Ward, to allow twenty pounds per ann. for me, towards the poor-house now on foot for clergymen's widows, in the diocese of Derry.

Ex. 26. *Rhode Island, 7th of May,* 1730. Last week I received a packet from you by the way of Philadelphia, the postage whereof amounted to above four pounds of this country money. I thank you for the enclosed pamphlet,* which in the main I think very seasonable and useful. It seems to me that, in computing the sum total of the loss by absentees, you have extended some articles beyond their due proportion—e. g. when you charge the whole income of occasional absentees in the third class; and that you have charged some articles twice—e. g. when you make distinct articles for law suits 9000*l.*, and for attendance on employments and other business 8000*l.*, both which seem already charged in the third class. The tax you propose seems very reasonable, and I wish it may take effect for the good of the

* Mr. Prior's celebrated List of the Absentees of Ireland, published in 1729.

kingdom, which will be obliged to you if it can be brought about. That it would be the interest of England to allow a free trade to Ireland, I have been thoroughly convinced, ever since my being in Italy and talking with the merchants there; and have upon all occasions endeavoured to convince English gentlemen thereof, and have convinced some both in and out of parliament; and I remember to have discoursed with you at large upon the subject when I was last in Dublin. Your hints for setting up new manufactures seem reasonable; but the spirit of projecting is low in Ireland.—Now as to my own affair, I must tell you I have no intention of continuing in these parts, but in order to settle the college his majesty hath been pleased to found in Bermuda; and I want only the payment of the king's grant to transport myself and family thither. I am now employing the interest of my friends in England for that purpose, and I have wrote in the most pressing manner either to get the money paid, or at least such an authentic answer as I may count upon, and may direct me what course I am to take. Dr. Clayton indeed hath wrote me word, that he hath been informed by a very good friend of mine, who had it from a very great man, that the money will not be paid. But I cannot think a hearsay at second or third hand to be a proper answer for me to act upon. I have therefore suggested to the doctor, that it might be proper for him to go himself to the treasury with the letters patent containing the grant in his hands, and there make his demand in form. I have also wrote to others to use their interest at court; though indeed one would have thought all solicitation at an end when once I had obtained a grant under his majesty's hand and the broad seal of England. As to my own going to London and soliciting in person, I think it reasonable first to see what my friends can do; and the rather because I shall have small hopes that my solicitation will be regarded more than theirs. Be assured I long to know the upshot of this matter, and that upon an explicit refusal I am determined to return home, and that it is not at all in my thoughts to continue abroad and hold my deanery. It is well known to many considerable persons in England, that I might have had a dispensation for holding it in my absence during life, and that I was much pressed to it; but I resolutely declined it; and if our college had taken place as soon as I once hoped it would, I should have resigned before this time. A little after my coming to this island, I entertained some thoughts of applying to his majesty (when Dr. Clayton had received the 20,000*l.*), to translate our college hither; but have since seen cause to lay aside all thoughts of that matter. I do assure you, *bonâ fide*, that I have no intention to stay here longer than I can get an authentic answer from the government, which I have all the reason in the world to expect this summer; for, upon all private accounts, I should like

Derry better than New England. As to my being in this island, I think I have already informed you that I have been at very great expense in purchasing land and stock here, which might supply the defects of Bermuda in yielding those provisions to our college, the want of which was made a principal objection against its situation in that island. To conclude, as I am here in order to execute a design addressed for by parliament, and set on foot by his majesty's royal charter, I think myself obliged to wait the event, whatever course is taken in Ireland about my deanery. I have wrote to both the bishops of Raphoe and Derry: but letters, it seems, are of uncertain passage; your last was half a year in coming, and I have had some a year after their date, though often in two or three months, and sometimes less. I must desire you to present my duty to both their lordships, and acquaint them with what I have now wrote to you, in answer to the kind message from my lord bishop of Derry conveyed by your hands, for which pray return my humble thanks to his lordship. My wife gives her service to you. She hath been lately ill of a miscarriage, but is now, I thank God, recovered. Our little son is great joy to us: we are such fools as to think him the most perfect thing in its kind that we ever saw.

Ex. 27. *Newport, 20th of July*, 1730. Since my last of the 7th of May, I have not had one line from the persons to whom I had wrote to make the last instances for the 20,000*l.* This I impute to an accident that we hear happened to a man of war, as it was coming down the river bound for Boston, where it was expected some months ago, and is now daily looked for with the new governor. The newspapers of last February mentioned Dr. Clayton's being made bishop. I wish him joy of his preferment, since I doubt we are not likely to see him in this part of the world.

The settlement of affairs with his fellow executor Mr. Marshal, with a Mr. Partinton Vanhomrigh, and with the creditors of Mrs. Esther Vanhomrigh in London, involved our Author in a great deal of trouble for near four years. His letters to Mr. T. Prior are full of this business, which cannot at this day be interesting to any body. It is thought proper, however, to subjoin a few extracts from them, as a proof how strongly he felt this embarrassment in the midst of his Bermuda project.

Ex. 28. *London, 8th of Dec.*, 1724. Provided you bring my affair with Partinton to a complete issue before Christmas day come twelvemonth, by reference or otherwise, that I may have my dividend, whatever it is, clear, I do hereby promise you to increase the premium I promised you before by its fifth part, whatever it amounts to.

Ex. 29. *20th of July*, 1725. Our South Sea stock is con-

firmed to be what I already informed you, 880*l.*, somewhat more or less. But before you get Partinton and Marshal to sign the letters of attorney or make the probates, nay before you tell them of the value of subscribed annuities, you should by all means, in my opinion, insist, carry, and secure two points: first, that Partinton should consent to a partition of this stock, &c., which I believe he cannot deny: secondly, that Marshal should engage not to touch one penny of it till all debts on this side the water are satisfied. I even desire you would take advice, and legally secure it in such sort that he may not touch it if he would, till the said debts are paid. It would be the wrongest thing in the world, and give me the greatest pain possible to think, we did not administer in the justest sense. Whatever therefore appears to be due, let it be instantly paid; here is money sufficient to do it. I must therefore entreat you once for all to clear up and agree with Marshal what is due, and then make an end by paying that which it is a shame was not paid sooner. For God's sake adjust, finish, conclude any way with Partinton; for at the rate we have gone on these two years, we may go on twenty. In your next let me know what you have proposed to him and Marshal, and how they relish it. I hoped to have been in Dublin by this time; but business grows out of business. P.S. Bermuda prospers.

Ex. 30. 16*th of October*, 1725. I beg you will lose no more time, but take proper methods out of hand for selling the S. S. stock and annuities. I have very good reason to apprehend they will sink in their value, and desire you to let Vanhomrigh Partinton and Mr. Marshal know as much. The less there is to be expected from them, the more I must hope from you. I know not how to move them at this distance but by you; and if what I have already said will not do, I profess myself to be at a loss for words to move you. You have told me Partinton was willing to refer matters to an arbitration, but not of lawyers; and that Marshal would refer them only to lawyers. For my part, rather than fail, I am for referring them to any honest knowing person or persons, whether lawyers or not lawyers; and if M. will not come into this, I desire you will do all you can to oblige him, either by persuasion or otherwise: particularly represent to him my resolution of going (with God's blessing) in April next to Bermuda, which will probably make it his interest to compromise matters out of hand. But if he will not, agree if possible with P. to force him to compliance in putting an end to our disputes.

Ex. 31. 2*nd of Dec.*, 1725. I must repeat to you that I earnestly wish to see things brought to some conclusion with Partinton. Dear Tom, it requires some address, diligence, and management to bring business of this kind to an issue, which

should not seem impossible, considering it can be none of our interests to spend our lives and substance in law. I am willing to refer things to an arbitration, even not of lawyers. Pray push this point, and let me hear from you upon it.

Ex. 32. 11*th of Dec.*, 1725. It is now near three months since I told you there were strong reasons for haste [in selling the S. S. stock], and these reasons grow every moment stronger. I need say no more; I can say no more to you.

Ex. 33. 30*th of Dec.*, 1725. I am exceedingly plagued by these creditors, and am quite tired and ashamed of repeating the same answer to them, that I expect every post to hear what Mr. Marshal and you think of their pretensions, and that then they shall be paid. It is now a full twelvemonth that I have been expecting to hear from you on this head, and expecting in vain. I shall therefore expect no longer, nor hope nor desire to know what Mr. Marshal thinks, but only what you think, or what appears to you by Mrs. Vanhomrigh's papers and accounts. This is what solely depends on you, what I sued for several months ago, and what you promised to send me an account of long before this time.

Ex. 34. 20*th of Jan.*, 1726. I am worried to death by creditors: I see nothing done, neither towards clearing their accounts, nor settling the effects here, nor finishing affairs with Partinton. I am at an end of my patience and almost of my wits. My conclusion is, not to wait a moment longer for Marshal, nor to have, if possible, any further regard to him, but to settle all things without him, and whether he will or no. How far this is practicable, you will know by consulting an able lawyer. I have some confused notion that one executor may act by himself; but how far, and in what case, you will thoroughly be informed. It is an infinite shame that the debts here are not cleared up and paid. I have borne the shock and importunity of creditors about a twelvemonth, and am never the nearer—have nothing new to say to them: judge you what I feel. But I have already said all that can be said on this head. It is also no small disappointment to find that we have been near three years doing nothing with respect to bringing things to a conclusion with Partinton. Is there no way of making a separate agreement with him? Is there no way of prevailing with him to consent to the sale of the reversion? Let me entreat you to proceed with a little management and despatch in these matters, and inform yourself particularly whether I may not come to a reference or arbitration with P., even though M. should be against it; whether I may not take steps that may compel M. to an agreement; what is the practised method, when one of two executors is negligent or unreasonable; in a word, whether an end may not be put to these matters one way or other. I do not doubt your skill: I only wish you were as active to serve an old friend as I should be in any affair of yours that lay in my power.

Ex. 35. *3rd of Sept.*, 1726. I must desire you to send me in a letter a full state of the particulars of our pretensions upon Partinton, that I may have a view of the several emoluments expected from this suit, and the grounds of such expectation, these affairs being at present a little out of my thoughts; that so having considered the whole, I may take advice here, and write thereupon to Marshal, in order to terminate that affair this winter if possible. It is worth while to exert for once. If this be done, the whole partition may be made, and your share distinctly known and paid you between this and Christmas. But I know it cannot be done unless you exert. As for M., I had from the beginning no opinion of him, no more than you have; otherwise I should not have troubled any body else.

Ex. 36. *12th of Nov.*, 1726. I have writ to you often for certain eclaircissements which are absolutely necessary to settle matters with the creditors, who importune me to death. You have no notion of the misery I have undergone, and do daily undergo on that account. For God's sake disembrangle these matters, that I may once be at ease to mind my other affairs of the college, which are enough to employ ten persons. I will not repeat what I have said in my former letters, but hope for your answer to all the points contained in them, and immediately to what relates to despatching the creditors. I propose to make a purchase of land (which is very dear) in Bermuda, upon my first going thither; for which, and for other occasions, I shall want all the money I can possibly raise against my voyage. For this purpose it would be a mighty service to me if the affairs with P. were adjusted this winter by reference or compromise. The state of all that business, which I desired you to send me, I do now again earnestly desire. What is doing, or has been done, in that matter? Can you contrive no way for bringing P. to an immediate sale of the remaining lands? What is your opinion and advice upon the whole? What prospect can I have, if I leave things at sixes and sevens when I go to another world, seeing all my remonstrances even now that I am near at hand are to no purpose? I know money is at present at a very high foot of exchange. I shall therefore wait a little in hopes it may become lower: but it will at all events be necessary to draw over my money. I have spent here a matter of six hundred pounds more than you know of, for which I have not yet drawn over. I had some other points to speak to, but am cut short.

Ex. 37. *1st of Dec.*, 1726. I have lately received several letters of yours, which have given me a good deal of light with respect to Mrs. Vanhomrigh's affairs. But I am so much employed on the business of Bermuda, that I have hardly time to mind any thing else. I shall nevertheless snatch the present moment to write you short answers to the queries you propose.

As to Bermuda, it is now, &c. [See above, Ex. 12.] You also desire I would speak to Ned. You must know Ned hath parted from me ever since the beginning of last July. I allowed him six shillings a week, beside his annual wages; and beside an entire livery, I gave him old clothes which he made a penny of. But the creature grew idle and worthless to a prodigious degree: he was almost constantly out of the way; and when I told him of it, he used to give me warning. I bore with this behaviour about nine months, and let him know I did it in compassion to him, and in hopes he would mend: but finding no hopes of this, I was forced at last to discharge him, and take another, who is as diligent as he was negligent. When he parted from me, I paid him between six and seven pounds which was due to him, and likewise gave him money to bear his charges to Ireland, whither he said he was going. I met him the other day in the street, and asking why he was not gone to Ireland to his wife and child, he made answer that he had neither wife nor child. He got, it seems, into another service when he left me, but continued only a fortnight in it. The fellow is silly to an incredible degree, and spoiled by good usage. I shall take care the pictures be sold in an auction. Mr. Smilert, whom I know to be a very honest, skilful person, in his profession, will see them put into an auction at the proper time, which he tells me is not till the town fills with company, about the meeting of parliament. I remember to have told you I could know more of matters here than perhaps people generally do. You thought we did wrong to sell: but the stocks are fallen, and depend upon it they will fall lower.

After our Author's return to Europe, the correspondence was renewed with Mr. Prior. The following extracts will continue Dr. Berkeley's history to a late period of his life.

Ex. 38. *Green-street, 13th of March,* 1733. I thank you for the account you sent me of the house, &c., on Arbor hill. I approve of that and the terms; so you will fix the agreement for this year to come (according to the tenor of your letter) with Mr. Lesly, to whom my humble service. I remember one of that name, a good sort of man, a class or two below me in the college. I am willing to pay for the whole year commencing from the 25th inst., but cannot take the furniture, &c. into my charge till I go over, which I truly propose to do as soon as my wife is able to travel. She expects to be brought to bed in two months; and having had two miscarriages, one of which she was extremely ill of, in Rhode Island, she cannot venture to stir before she is delivered. This circumstance not foreseen occasions an unexpected delay, putting off to summer the journey I proposed to take in spring. I hope our affair with Partinton will be finished this term. We are here on the eve of great events,

to-morrow being the day appointed for a pitched battle in the house of commons.

Ex. 39. 27*th of March*, 1733. This comes to desire you will exert yourself on a public account, which you know is acting in your proper sphere. It has been represented here, that in certain parts of the kingdom of Ireland justice is much obstructed for the want of justices of the peace, which is only to be remedied by taking in Dissenters. A great man hath spoke to me on this point. I told him the view of this was plain; and that in order to facilitate this view I suspected the account was invented, for that I did not think it true. Depend upon it, better service cannot be done at present than by putting this matter as soon as possible in a fair light, and that supported by such proofs as may be convincing here. I therefore recommend it to you to make the speediest and exactest inquiry that you can into the truth of this fact, the result whereof send to me. Send me also the best estimate you can get of the number of papists, dissenters, and churchmen throughout the kingdom; an estimate also of dissenters considerable for rank, figure, and estate; an estimate also of the papists in Ulster. Be as clear in these points as you can. When the above-mentioned point was put to me, I said that in my apprehension there was no such lack of justice or magistrates except in Kerry or Connaught, where the dissenters were not considerable enough to be of any use in redressing the evil. Let me know particularly whether there be any such want of justices of the peace in the county of Londonderry, or whether men are aggrieved there by being obliged to repair to them at too great distances. The prime sergeant Singleton may probably be a means of assisting you to get light in these particulars. The despatch you give this affair will be doing the best service to your country. Enable me to clear up the truth, and to support it by such reasons and testimonies as may be felt or credited. Facts I am myself too much a stranger to, though I promise to make the best use I can of those you furnish me with, towards taking off an impression which I fear is already deep. If I succeed, I shall congratulate my being here at this juncture.

Ex. 40. 14*th of April*, 1733. I thank you for your last, particularly for that part of it wherein you promise the number of the justices of peace, of the papists also and the protestants throughout the kingdom, taken out of proper offices. I did not know such inventories had been taken by public authority, and am glad to find it so. Your argument for proving papists but three to one I had before made use of; but some of the premises are not clear to Englishmen. Nothing can do so well as the estimate you speak of, to be taken from a public office; which therefore I impatiently expect. As to the design I hinted, whether it is to be set on foot there or here I cannot say. I hope it will take effect no where. It is yet a secret; I may nevertheless

discover something of it in a little time, and you may then hear more. The political state of things on this side the water I need say nothing of: the public papers probably say too much; though it cannot be denied much may be said. I must desire you in your next to let me know what premium there is for getting into the public fund, which allows five per cent. in Ireland; and whether a considerable sum might easily be purchased therein; also what is the present legal current interest in Ireland; and whether it be easy to lay out money on a secure mortgage where the interest should be punctually paid. I shall be also glad to hear a word about the law-suit.

Ex. 41. 19*th of April*, 1733. I thank you for your last advices, and the catalogue of justices particularly; of all which proper use shall be made. The number of protestants and papists throughout the kingdom, which in your last but one you said had been lately and accurately taken by the collectors of hearth-money, you promised, but have omitted to send: I shall hope for it in your next.

Ex. 42. 1*st of May*, 1733. I long for the numeration of protestant and popish families, which you tell me has been taken by the collectors. A certain person now here hath represented the papists as seven to one, which I have ventured to affirm is wide of the truth. What lights you gave me I have imparted to those who will make the proper use of them. I do not find that any thing was intended to be done by act of parliament here: as to that, your information seems right. I hope they will be able to do nothing any where. The approaching act at Oxford is much spoken of. The entertainments of music, &c., in the theatre, will be the finest that ever were known. For other public news, I reckon you know as much as yours.

Ex. 43. 7*th of Jan.*, 1734. My family are, I thank God, all well at present: but it will be impossible for us to travel before the spring. As to myself, by regular living and rising very early, which I find the best thing in the world, I am very much mended: insomuch that though I cannot read, yet my thoughts seem as distinct as ever. I do therefore for amusement pass my early hours in thinking of certain mathematical matters, which may possibly produce something. You say nothing of the law-suit. I hope it is to surprise me in your next with an account of its being finished. Perhaps the house and garden on Montpellier hill may be got a good pennyworth, in which case I should not be averse to buying it. It is probable a tenement in so remote a part may be purchased at an easy rate.

Ex. 44. 15*th of Jan.*, 1734. I received last post your three letters together, for which advices I give you thanks. I had at the same time two from Baron Wainwright on the same account. That without my intermeddling I may have the offer of some-

what, I am apt to think, which may make me easy in point of situation and income, though I question whether the dignity will much contribute to make me so. Those who imagine, as you write, that I may pick and choose, to be sure think that I have been making my court here all this time, and would never believe (what is most true) that I have not been at the court, or at the minister's, but once these seven years. The care of my health and the love of retirement have prevailed over whatsoever ambition might have come to my share.—Pray send me as particular an account as you can get of the country, the situation, the house, the circumstances of the bishopric of Cloyne: and let me know the charge of coming into a bishopric, i. e. the amount of the fees and first-fruits.

Ex. 45. 19*th of Jan.*, 1734. Since my last I have kissed their majesties' hands for the bishopric of Cloyne, having first received an account from the duke of Newcastle's office, setting forth that his grace had laid before the king the duke of Dorset's recommendation, which was readily complied with by his majesty. The condition of my own health and that of my family will not suffer me to travel at this season of the year: I must therefore entreat you to take care of the fees and patent. I shall be glad to hear from you what you can learn about this bishopric of Cloyne.

Ex. 46. 22*nd of Jan.*, 1734. On the 6th instant, the duke sent over his plan, wherein I was recommended to the bishopric of Cloyne: on the 14th I received a letter from the secretary's office, signifying his majesty's having immediately complied therewith, and containing the duke of Newcastle's very obliging compliments thereupon. In all this I was nothing surprised, his grace the lord lieutenant having declared on this side the water that he intended to serve me the first opportunity, though at the same time he desired me to say nothing of it. As to the A. B. D. (Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Hoadley), I readily believe he gave no opposition. He knew it would be to no purpose, and the queen herself had expressly enjoined him not to oppose me: this I certainly knew when the A. B. was here, though I never saw him. Notwithstanding all which, I had a strong penchant to be dean of Dromore, and not to take the charge of a bishopric upon me. Those who formerly opposed my being dean of Down have thereby made me a bishop; which rank, how desirable soever it may seem, I had before absolutely determined to keep out of. The situation of my own and my family's health will not suffer me to think of travelling before April. However, as on that side it may be thought proper that I should vacate the deanery of Derry, I am ready, as soon as I hear the bishopric of Cloyne is void by Dr. Synge's being legally possessed of the see of Ferns, to send over a resignation of my deanery: and I

authorize you to signify as much, where you think proper. I should be glad you sent me a rude plan of the house from Bishop Synge's description, that I may forecast the furniture. The great man, whom you mention as my opponent, concerted his measures but ill. For it appears by your letter, that at the very time when my brother informed the speaker of his soliciting against me there, the duke's plan had already taken place here, and the resolution was passed in my favour at St. James's. I am nevertheless pleased, as it gave me an opportunity of being obliged to the speaker, which I shall not fail to acknowledge when I see him, which will probably be very soon, for he is expected here as soon as the session is up. My family are well, though I myself have gotten a cold this sharp foggy weather, having been obliged, contrary to my wonted custom, to be much abroad, paying compliments and returning visits.

Ex. 47. *28th of Jan.*, 1734. In a late letter you told me the bishopric of Cloyne is let for 1200*l.* per annum, out of which there is a small rent-charge of interest to be paid. I am informed by a letter of yours which I received this day, that there is also a demesne of 800 acres adjoining to the episcopal house. I desire to be informed by your next, whether these 800 acres are understood to be over and above the 1200*l.* per annum, and whether they were kept by former bishops in their own hands. In my last I mentioned to you the impossibility of my going to Ireland before spring, and that I would send a resignation of my deanery, if need was, immediately upon the vacancy of the see of Cloyne. I have been since told that this would be a step of some hazard, viz. in case of the king's death, which I hope is far off: however one would not care to do a thing which may seem incautious and imprudent in the eye of the world. Not but that I would rather do it than be obliged to go over at this season. But as the bulk of the deanery is in tithes, and a very inconsiderable part in land, the damage to my successor would be but a trifle upon my keeping it to the end of March. I would know what you advise on this matter.

Ex. 48. *7th of Feb.*, 1734. I have been for several days laid up with the gout. When I last wrote to you I was confined, but at first knew not whether it might not be a sprain or hurt from the shoe. But it soon showed itself a genuine fit of the gout in both my feet, by the pain, inflammation, swelling, &c., attended with a fever and restless nights. With my feet lapped up in flannels, and raised on a cushion, I receive the visits of my friends, who congratulate me on this occasion as much as on my preferment.

Ex. 49. *2nd of March*, 1734. As to what you write of the prospect of new vacancies, and your advising that I should apply for a better bishopric, I thank you for your advice. But if it

pleased God the bishop of Derry were actually dead, and there were ever so many promotions thereupon, I would not apply, or so much as open my mouth to any one friend to make an interest for getting any of them. To be so very hasty for a removal even before I had seen Cloyne, would argue a greater greediness for lucre than I hope I shall ever have. Not but that, all things considered, I have a fair demand upon the government for expense of time and pains and money on the faith of public charters: as likewise because I find the income of Cloyne considerably less than was at first represented. I had no notion that I should, over and above the charge of patents and first-fruits, be obliged to pay between four and five hundred pounds for which I shall never see a farthing in return, besides interest I am to pay for upwards of 300*l.*, which principal devolves upon my successor. No more was I apprised of three curates, viz. two at Youghal and one at Aghadoe, to be paid by me. And after all, the certain value of the income I have not yet learned. My predecessor writes that he doth not know the true value himself, but believes it may be about 1200*l.* per annum including the fines, and striking them at a medium for seven years. The uncertainty, I believe, must proceed from the fines; but it may be supposed that he knows exactly what the rents are, and what the tithes, and what the payments to the curates; of which particulars you may probably get an account from him. Sure I am, that if I had gone to Derry, and taken my affairs into my own hands, I might have made considerably above 1000*l.* a year, after paying the curates' salaries. And as for charities, such as schoolboys, widows, &c., those ought not to be reckoned, because all sorts of charities, as well as contingent expenses, must be much higher on a bishop than a dean. But in all appearance, subducting the money that I must advance, and the expense of the curates in Youghal and Aghadoe, I shall not have remaining 1000*l.* per annum; not even though the whole income was worth 1200*l.*, of which I doubt, by Bishop Synge's uncertainty, that it will be found to fall short. I thank you for the information you gave me of a house to be hired in Stephen's Green. I should like the Green very well for situation: but I have no thoughts of taking a house in town suddenly; nor would it be convenient for my affairs so to do, considering the great expense I must be at on coming into a small bishopric. My gout has left me. I have nevertheless a weakness remaining in my feet, and what is worse, an extreme tenderness, the effect of my long confinement. I was abroad the beginning of this week to take a little air in the park, which gave me a cold, and obliged me to physic and two or three days' confinement. I have several things to prepare in order to my journey, and shall make all the despatch I can. But why I should endanger my health by too much hurry, or why I

should precipitate myself in this convalescent state into doubtful weather and cold lodgings on the road, I do not see. There is but one reason that I can comprehend why the great men there should be so urgent; viz. for fear that I should make an interest here in case of vacancies; which I have already assured you I do not intend to do; so they may be perfectly easy on that score.

Ex. 50. 13*th of March*, 1734. I am *bonâ fide* making all the haste I can. My library is to be embarked on board the first ship bound to Cork, of which I am in daily expectation. I suppose it will be no difficult matter to obtain an order from the commissioners to the custom-house officers there to let it pass duty-free, which at first word was granted here on my coming from America. I wish you would mention this, with my respects, to Dr. Coghil. After my journey I trust that I shall find my health much better, though at present I am obliged to guard against the east wind, with which we have been annoyed of late, and which never fails to disorder my head. I am in hopes however, by what I hear, that I shall be able to reach Dublin before my lord lieutenant leaves it. I shall reckon it my misfortune if I do not: I am sure it shall not be for want of doing all that lies in my power. I am in a hurry. I am obliged to manage my health, and I have many things to do. I must desire you at your leisure to look out a lodging for us, to be taken only by the week: for I shall stay no longer in Dublin than needs must. I would have the lodging taken for the 10th of April.

Ex. 51. 20*th of March*, 1734. There is one Mr. Cox, a clergyman, son to the late Dr. Cox near Drogheda, who, I understand, is under the patronage of Dr. Coghil. Pray, inform yourself of his character; whether he be a good man, one of parts and learning, and how he is provided for. This you may possibly do without my being named. Perhaps my brother may know something of him. I should be glad to be apprised of his character on my coming to Dublin. No one has recommended him to me; but his father was an ingenious man, and I saw two sensible women his sisters at Rhode Island, which inclines me to think him a man of merit; and such only I would prefer. I have had certain persons recommended to me; but I shall consider their merits preferably to all recommendation. If you can answer for the ingenuity, learning, and good qualities of the person you mentioned preferably to that of others in competition, I should be very glad to serve him.

Ex. 52. *St. Alban's*, 30*th of April*, 1734. I was deceived by the assurance given me of two ships going to Cork. In the event, one could not take in my goods, and the other took freight for another port. So that, after all their delays and prevarications, I have been obliged to ship off my things for Dublin on

board of Captain Leach. From this involuntary cause I have been detained here so long beyond my intentions, which really were to have got to Dublin before the parliament, which now I much question whether I shall be able to do, considering that as I have two young children with me, I cannot make such despatch on the road as otherwise I might. The lodging in Jervais-street which you formerly procured for me will, I think, do very well. I shall want a stable for six coach-horses: for so many I bring with me.*

* The following letters, not hitherto published in the author's works, are copied from the Gentleman's Magazine, vol. ci.

DEAR MR. SMIBERT, *Cloyne, 31st of May*, 1735.

A great variety and hurry of affairs, joined with ill state of health, hath deprived me of the pleasure of corresponding with you for this good while past, and indeed I am very sensible that the task of answering a letter is so disagreeable to you, that you can well dispense with receiving one of mere compliment, or which doth not bring something pertinent and useful. You are the proper judge whether the following suggestions may be so or no. I do not pretend to give advice, I only offer a few hints for your own reflection.

What if there be in my neighbourhood a great trading city? What if this city be four times as populous as Boston, and a hundred times as rich? What if there be more faces to paint, and better pay for painting, and yet nobody to paint them? Whether it would be disagreeable to you to receive gold instead of paper? Whether it might be worth your while to embark with your busts, your prints, and your drawings, and once more cross the Atlantic? Whether you might not find full business in Cork, and live there much cheaper than in London? Whether all these things put together might not be worth a serious thought? I have one more question to ask, and that is, whether myrtles grow in or near Boston without pots, stoves, or green-houses, in the open air? I assure you they do in my garden. So much for the climate. Think of what hath been said, and God direct you for the best. I am, good Mr. Smibert, your affectionate humble servant, GEORGE CLOYNE.

P. S. My wife is exceedingly your humble servant, and joins in compliments both to you and yours. We should be glad to hear the state of your health and family. We have now three boys, doubtful which is the prettiest. My two eldest passed well through the small pox last winter. I have my own health better in Cloyne than I had either in old England or New.

DEAR SIR, *Cloyne, 30th of June*, 1736.

In this remote corner of Imokilly, where I hear only the rumours and echoes of things, I know not whether you are still sailing on the ocean, or already arrived to take possession of your new dignity and estate. In the former case I wish you a good voyage, in the latter I welcome you and wish you joy. I have a letter written and lying by me these three years, which I knew not whither or how to send you. But now you are returned to our hemisphere, I promise myself the pleasure of being able to correspond with you. You who live to be a spectator of odd scenes, are come into a world much madder and odder than that you left. We also in this island are growing an odd and mad people. We were odd before, but I was not sure of our having the genius necessary to become mad. But some late steps of a public nature give sufficient proof thereof. Who knows but when you have settled your affairs, and looked about and laughed enough in England, you may have leisure and curiosity to visit this side of the water? You may land within two miles of my house, and find that from Bristol to Cloyne is a shorter and much easier journey than from London to Bristol. I would go about with you, and show you some scenes perhaps as beautiful as you have seen in all your travels. My own garden is not without its curiosity, having a great number of myrtles, several of which are seven or eight feet high. They grow naturally, with no more trouble or art than gooseberry-bushes. This is literally true. Of this part of the world it may be truly said, that it is—

Ex. 53. *Cloyne, 5th of March*, 1737. I here send you what you desire. If you approve of it, publish it in one or more newspapers: if you have any objection, let me know it by the next post. I mean, as you see, a brief abstract, which I could wish were spread through the nation, that men may think on the subject against next session. But I would not have this letter made public sooner than a week after the publication of the third part of my Querist, which I have ordered to be sent to you. I believe you may receive it about the time that this comes to your hands; for, as I told you in a late letter, I have hastened it as much as possible. I have used the same editor (Dr. Madden) for this as for the two foregoing parts.

Our spinning school is in a thriving way. The children begin to find a pleasure in being paid in hard money, which I understand they will not give to their parents, but keep to buy clothes for themselves. Indeed I found it difficult and tedious to bring them to this, but I believe it will now do. I am building a work-house for sturdy vagrants, and design to raise about two acres of hemp for employing them. Can you put me in a way of getting hemp-seed, or does your society distribute any? It is hoped your flax-seed will come in time. Last post a letter from an English bishop tells me, a difference between the king and prince is got into parliament, and that it seems to be big with mischief, if a speedy expedient be not found to heal the breach. It relates to the provision for his royal highness's family. My three children have been ill: the eldest and youngest are recovered; but George is still unwell.

[Enclosed in the above a Letter to A. B. Esq., from the Querist, containing Thoughts on a national bank, printed in the Dublin Journal.]

Ex. 54. *Cloyne, 15th of Feb.*, 1741. Mr. Faulkner,—The following being a very safe and successful cure of the bloody flux, which at this time is become so general, you will do well to make it public. Give a heaped spoonful of common rosin powdered in a little fresh broth, every five or six hours, till the bloody flux is stopped; which I have always found before a farthing's worth of rosin was spent. If after the blood is staunched there remains a little looseness, this is soon carried off by milk and water

Ver ubi longum lepidasque præbet
Jupiter brumas.

My wife most sincerely salutes you. We should without compliment be overjoyed to see you. I am in hopes soon to hear of your welfare, and remain, dear Sir, your most obedient and affectionate servant, G. Cloyne.

Sir John James, Bart., of Bury St. Edmund's, the last baronet of that line, and Mr. Smibert, an artist, of the Little Piazza, Covent Garden, but at the date of this letter residing at Boston, New England, had accompanied Dean Berkeley in his Bermuda expedition.

boiled with a little chalk in it. This cheap and easy method I have often tried of late, and never knew it fail. I am your humble servant, A. B.

Ex. 55. *Cloyne, 24th of Feb.*, 1741. I find you have published my remedy in the newspaper of this day. I now tell you that the patients must be careful of their diet, and especially beware of taking cold. The best diet I find to be plain broth of mutton or fowl, without seasoning of any kind. Their drink should be, till they are freed both from dysentery and diarrhœa, milk and water, or plain water boiled with chalk (drunk warm), e. g. about a large heaped spoonful to a quart. Sometimes I find it necessary to give it every four hours, and to continue it for a dose or two after the blood hath been stopped, to prevent relapses, which ill management hath now and then occasioned. Given in due time (the sooner the better) and with proper care, I take it to be as sure a cure for a dysentery as the bark for an ague. It has certainly by the blessing of God saved many lives, and continues to save many lives, in my neighbourhood. I shall be glad to know its success in any instances you may have tried it in.

Ex. 56. *Cloyne, 26th of Feb.*, 1741. I believe there is no relation that Mr. Sandys and Sir John Rushout have to Lord Wilmington, other than what I myself made by marrying Sir John Rushout's sister to the late earl of Northampton, who was brother to Lord Wilmington. Sandys is nephew to Sir John. As to kindred or affinity, I take it to have very little place in this matter. Nor do I think it possible to foretell whether the ministry will be whig or tory. The people are so generally and so much incensed, that (if I am rightly informed) both men and measures must be changed before we see things composed. Besides, in this disjointed state of things, the prince's party will be more considered than ever. It is my opinion, there will be no first minister in haste: and it will be new to act without one. When I had wrote thus far, I received a letter from a considerable hand on the other side the water, wherein are the following words. "Though the whigs and tories had gone hand in hand in their endeavour to demolish the late ministry, yet some true whigs, to show themselves such, were for excluding all tories from the new ministry. Lord Wilmington and duke of Dorset declared they would quit, if they proceeded on so narrow a bottom: and the prince, duke of Argyle, duke of Bedford, and many others refused to come in, except there was to be a coalition of parties. After many fruitless attempts to effect this, it was at last achieved between eleven and twelve on Tuesday night, and the prince went next morning to St. James's. It had been that very evening quite despaired of: and the meeting of the parliament came on so fast, that there was a prospect of nothing but great confusion." There is, I hope, a prospect now of much

better things. I much wanted to see this scheme prevail; which it has now done, and will, I trust, be followed by many happy consequences.

Ex. 57. *Cloyne, 19th of May,* 1741. Though the flax seed came in such quantity and so late, yet we have above one half ourselves in ground; the rest, together with our own seed, has been given to our poor neighbours, and will, I doubt not, answer, the weather being very favourable. The distresses of the sick and poor are endless. The havoc of mankind in the counties of Cork, Limerick, and some adjacent places hath been incredible. The nation probably will not recover this loss in a century. The other day, I heard one from the county of Limerick say, that whole villages were entirely dispeopled. About two months since, I heard Sir Richard Cox say, that five hundred were dead in the parish where he lives, though in a country, I believe, not very populous. It were to be wished people of condition were at their seats in the country during these calamitous times, which might provide relief and employment for the poor. Certainly, if these perish, the rich must be sufferers in the end. We have tried in this neighbourhood the receipt of a decoction of briar-roots for the bloody flux, which you sent me, and in some cases found it useful. But that which we find the most speedy, sure, and effectual cure above all others, is a heaped spoonful of rosin dissolved and mixed over a fire with two or three spoonfuls of oil, and added to a pint of broth for a clyster: which, upon once taking, hath never been known to fail stopping the bloody flux. At first I mixed the rosin in the broth: but that was difficult, and not so speedy a cure.

Ex. 58. *Cloyne, Feb.,* 1746. (With a letter signed Eubulus, containing advice about the manner of clothing the militia arrayed this year, which letter was printed in the Dublin Journal.) The above letter contains a piece of advice, which seems to me not unseasonable or useless. You may make use of Faulkner for conveying it to the public, without any intimation of the author. There is handed about a lampoon against our troop, which hath caused great indignation in the warriors of Cloyne. I am informed that Dean Gervais had been looking for the Querist, and could not find one in the shops, for my lord lieutenant, at his desire. I wish you could get one, handsomely bound, for his excellency; or at least, the last published relating to the Bank, which consisted of excerpta out of the three parts of the Querist. I wrote to you before to procure two copies of this for his excellency and Mr. Liddel.

Ex. 59. *24th of Jan.,* 1747. You asked me in your last letter, whether we had not provided a house in Cloyne for the reception and cure of sick persons. By your query it seems there is some such report: but what gave rise to it could be no more

than this, viz. that we are used to lodge a few strolling sick with a poor tenant or two in Cloyne, and employ a poor woman or two to tend them, and supply them with a few necessaries from our house. This may be magnified (as things gather in the telling) into an hospital: but the truth is merely what I tell you. I wish you would send me a pamphlet political now and then, with what news you hear. Is there any apprehension of an invasion upon Ireland?

Ex. 60. *6th of Feb.*, 1747. Your manner of accounting for the weather seems to have reason in it. And yet there still remains something unaccountable, viz. why there should be no rain in the regions mentioned. If the bulk, figure, situation, and motion of the earth are given, and the luminaries remain the same, should there not be a certain cycle of the seasons ever returning at certain periods? To me it seems, that the exhalations perpetually sent up from the bowels of the earth have no small share in the weather; that nitrous exhalations produce cold and frost; and that the same causes which produce earthquakes within the earth produce storms above it. Such are the variable causes of our weather; which if it proceeded only from fixed and given causes, the changes thereof would be as regular as the vicissitudes of the days, or the return of eclipses. I have writ this extempore—*valeat quantum valere potest.*

Ex. 61. *9th of Feb.*, 1747. You ask me if I had no hints from England about the primacy. I can only say, that last week I had a letter from a person of no mean rank, who seemed to wonder that he could not find I had entertained any thoughts of the primacy, while so many others of our bench were so earnestly contending for it. He added, that he hoped I would not take it ill if my friends wished me in that station. My answer was, that I am so far from soliciting, that I do not even wish for it; that I do not think myself the fittest man for that high post; and that therefore I neither have nor ever will ask it.

Ex. 62. *10th of Feb.*, 1747. In a letter from England, which I told you came a week ago, it was said that several of our Irish bishops were earnestly contending for the primacy. Pray, who are they? I thought Bishop Stone was only talked of at present. I ask this question merely out of curiosity, and not from any interest, I assure you. I am no man's rival or competitor in this matter. I am not in love with feasts, and crowds, and visits, and late hours, and strange faces, and a hurry of affairs often insignificant. For my own private satisfaction, I had rather be master of my time than wear a diadem. I repeat these things to you, that I may not seem to have declined all steps to the primacy out of singularity, or pride, or stupidity, but from solid motives. As for the argument from the opportunity of doing good, I observe, that duty obliges men in high station not

to decline occasions of doing good; but duty doth not oblige men to solicit such high stations.

Ex. 63. *19th of Feb.*, 1747. The ballad you sent has mirth in it, with a political sting in the tail. But the speech of Van Haaren is excellent. I believe it Lord Chesterfield's.—We have at present, and for these two days past, had frost and some snow. Our military men are at length sailed from Cork harbour. We hear they are designed for Flanders.

I must desire you to make at leisure the most exact and distinct inquiry you can, into the characters of the senior fellows, as to their behaviour, temper, piety, parts, and learning: also to make a list of them, with each man's character annexed to his name. I think it of so great consequence to the public to have a good provost, that I would willingly look beforehand, and stir a little to prepare an interest, or at least to contribute my mite where I properly may, in favour of a worthy man to fill that post, when it shall become vacant.—Dr. Hales, in a letter to me, has made very honourable mention of you to me. It would not be amiss if you should correspond with him, especially for the sake of granaries and prisons.

Ex. 64. *20th of Feb.*, 1747. Though the situation of the earth with respect to the sun changes, yet the changes are fixed and regular: if, therefore, this were the cause of the variation of the winds, the variation of winds must be regular, i. e. regularly returning in a cycle. To me it seems, that the variable cause of the variable winds are the subterraneous fires, which constantly burning, but altering their operation according to the various quantity or kind of combustible materials they happen to meet with, send up exhalations, more or less, of this or that species, which diversly fermenting in the atmosphere, produce uncertain, variable winds and tempests. This, if I mistake not, is the true solution of that crux. As to the papers about petrifactions, which I sent to you and Mr. Simon, I do not well remember the contents. But be you so good as to look them over, and show them to some others of your society. And if after this you shall think them worth publishing in your collections, you may do as you please. Otherwise I would not have things hastily and carelessly written thrust into public view.

[*The following anonymous piece, on a subject connected with the preceding, may deserve a place here. It is in the bishop's handwriting, and seems to have been inserted in one of the London prints.*]

TO THE PUBLISHER.

SIR,—Having observed it hath been offered as a reason to persuade the public, that the late shocks felt in and about Lon-

don were not caused by an earthquake, because the motion was lateral, which, it is asserted, the motion of an earthquake never is, I take upon me to affirm the contrary. I have myself felt an earthquake at Messina in the year 1718, when the motion was horizontal or lateral. It did no harm in that city, but threw down several houses about a day's journey from thence.

We are not to think the late shocks merely an airquake, as they call it, on account of signs and changes in the air, such being usually observed to attend earthquakes. There is a correspondence between the subterraneous air and our atmosphere. It is probable that storms or great concussions of the air do often, if not always, owe their origin to vapours or exhalations issuing from below.

I remember to have heard Count Tezzani, at Catania, say, that some hours before the memorable earthquake of 1692, which overturned the whole city, he observed a line extended in the air, proceeding, as he judged, from exhalations poised and suspended in the atmosphere; also that he heard a hollow, frightful murmur about a minute before the shock. Of 25,000 inhabitants 18,000 absolutely perished; not to mention others who were miserably bruised and wounded. There did not escape so much as one single house. The streets were narrow, and the buildings high; so there was no safety in running into the streets: but on the first tremor (which happens a small space, perhaps a few minutes, before the downfall) they found it the safest way to stand under a door-case, or at the corners of the house.

The count was dug out of the ruins of his own house, which had overwhelmed about twenty persons, only seven whereof were got out alive. Though he rebuilt his house with stone, yet he ever after lay in a small adjoining apartment made of reeds, plaistered over. Catania was rebuilt more regular and beautiful than ever: the houses indeed are lower, and the streets broader than before, for security against future shocks. By their account, the first shock seldom or never doth the mischief: but the *repliche*, as they term them, are to be dreaded. The earth, I was told, moved up and down like the boiling of a pot, *terra bollente di sotto in sopra*, to use their own expression. This sort of subsultive motion is ever accounted the most dangerous.

Pliny, in the second book of his Natural History, observes, that all earthquakes are attended with a great stillness of the air. The same was observed at Catania. Pliny further observes, that a murmuring noise precedes the earthquake. He also remarks, that there is *signum in cœlo, præceditque motu futuro, aut interdiu, aut paulo post occasum sereno, ceu tenuis linea nubis in longum porrectæ spatium:* which agrees with what was observed by Count Tezzani and others at Catania. And all these things plainly

show the mistake of those who surmise that noises and signs in the air do not belong to, or betoken, an earthquake, but only an airquake.

The naturalist above cited, speaking of the earth, saith, that *variè quatitur*, up and down sometimes, at others from side to side. He adds, that the effects are very various: cities, one while demolished, another swallowed up; sometimes overwhelmed by water, at other times consumed by fire bursting from the earth: one while the gulf remains open and yawning; another, the sides close, not leaving the least trace or sign of the city swallowed up.

Britain is an island—*maritima autem maximè quatiuntur*, saith Pliny—and in this island are many mineral and sulphureous waters. I see nothing in the *natural* constitution of London, or the parts adjacent, that should render an earthquake impossible or improbable. Whether there be any thing in the *moral* state thereof that should exempt it from that fear, I leave others to judge. I am your humble servant, A. (G.) B.

Ex. 65. *Cloyne, 22nd of March*, 1747. As to what you say, that the primacy would have been a glorious thing, for my part I do not see, all things considered, the glory of wearing the name of primate in these days, or of getting so much money, a thing every tradesman in London may get if he pleases. I should not choose to be primate, in pity to my children: and for doing good to the world, I imagine I may, upon the whole, do as much in a lower station.

Ex. 66. *23rd of June*, 1746. I perceive the earl of Chesterfield is, whether absent or present, a friend to Ireland; and there could not have happened a luckier incident to this poor island than the friendship of such a man, when there are so few of her own great men who either care or know how to befriend her. As my own wishes and endeavours, howsoever weak and ineffectual, have had the same tendency, I flatter myself that on this score he honours me with his regard; which is an ample recompence for more public merit than I can pretend to. As you transcribed a line from his letter relating to me, so in return I send you a line from a letter of the bishop of Gloucester's, relating to you;—I formerly told you I had mentioned you to the bishop when I sent your scheme:—these are his words: "I have had a great deal of discourse with your lord lieutenant. He expressed his good esteem of Mr. Prior and his character, and commended him as one who had no view in life but to do the utmost good he is capable of. As he has seen the scheme, he may have opportunity of mentioning it to as many of the cabinet as he pleases: but it will not be a fashionable doctrine at this time." So far the bishop. You are doubtless in the right on all proper occasions to cultivate a correspondence with Lord Chesterfield. When

you write, you will perhaps let him know in the properest manner the thorough sense I have of the honour he does me in his remembrance, and my concern at not having been able to wait on him.

Ex. 67. *3rd of July*, 1746. I send you back my letter, with a new paragraph to be added at the end, where you see the ∧.

Lord Chesterfield's letter does great honour both to you and his excellency. The nation should not lose the opportunity of profiting by such a viceroy, which indeed is a rarity not to be met with every season, which grows not on every tree. I hope your society will find means of encouraging particularly the two points he recommends, glass and paper. For the former you would do well to get your workmen from Holland rather than from Bristol. You have heard of the trick the glassmen of Bristol were said to have played Dr. Helsham and company.

My wife, with her compliments, sends you a present * by the Cork carrier who set out yesterday. It is an offering of the first fruits of her painting. She began to draw in last November, and did not stick to it closely, but by way of amusement only at leisure hours. For my part, I think she shows a most uncommon genius; but others may be supposed to judge more impartially than I. My two younger children are beginning to employ themselves the same way. In short, here are two or three families in Imokilly † bent upon painting: and I wish it was more general among the ladies and idle people, as a thing tha ;may divert the spleen, improve the manufactures, and increase the wealth of the nation. We will endeavour to profit by our lord lieutenant's advice, and kindle up new arts with a spark of his public spirit.

Mr. Simon has wrote to me, desiring I would become a member of the historico-physical society. I wish them well, but do not care to list myself among them; for in that case I should think myself obliged to do somewhat which might interrupt my other studies. I must therefore depend on you for getting me out of this scrape, and hinder Mr. Simon's proposing me, which he inclines to do at the request, it seems, of the bishop of Meath. And this, with my service, will be a sufficient answer to Mr. Simon's letter.

Ex. 68. *12th of Sept.*, 1746. I am just returned from a tour through my diocese of 130 miles, almost shaken to pieces. What you write of Bishop Stone's preferment is highly probable. For myself, though his excellency the lord lieutenant might have a better opinion of me than I deserved, yet it was not likely that he would make an Irishman primate. The truth is, I have

* The bishop's portrait painted by Mrs. Berkeley, afterwards in the possession of the Rev. Mr. Archdall, of Bolton Street, Dublin.

† The village of Cloyne is in the barony of Imokilly, county of Cork.

a scheme of my own for this long time past, in which I propose more satisfaction and enjoyment of myself than I could in that high station, which I neither solicited nor so much as wished for. It is true the primacy or archbishopric of Dublin, if offered, might have tempted me by a greater opportunity of doing good: but there is no other preferment in the kingdom to be desired on any other account than a greater *income*, which would not tempt me to remove from Cloyne, and set aside my Oxford scheme, on which, though delayed by the illness of my son, yet I am as intent and as much resolved as ever.

Ex. 69. *2nd of Feb.*, 1749. Three days ago we received the box of pictures. The two men's heads with ruffs are well done; the third is a copy and ill coloured: they are all Flemish: so is the woman, which is also very well painted, though it hath not the beauty and freedom of an Italian pencil. The two Dutch pictures, containing animals, are well done as to the animals; but the human figures and sky are ill done. The two pictures of ruins are very well done, and are Italian. My son William* had already copied two other pictures of the same kind, and by the same hand. He and his sister are both employed in copying pictures at present, which shall be despatched as soon as possible; after which they will set about some of yours. Their stint, on account of health, is an hour and half a day for painting. So I doubt two months will not suffice for copying: but no time shall be lost, and great care taken of your pictures, for which we hold ourselves much obliged. Our round tower stands where it did; but a little stone arched vault on the top was cracked, and must be repaired: the bell also was thrown down, and broke its way through three boarded stories, but remains entire. The door was shivered into many small pieces and dispersed, and there was a stone forced out of the wall. The whole damage, it is thought, will not amount to twenty pounds. The thunderclap was by far the greatest that I ever heard in Ireland.

Ex. 70. *30th of March*, 1751. They are going to print at Glasgow two editions at once, in 4to and in folio, of all Plato's works, in most magnificent types. This work should be encouraged; it would be right to mention it, as you have opportunity.†

TO THE REV. MR. ARCHDALL, BOLTON-STREET, DUBLIN.

Cloyne, 8th of Dec., 1751. Rev. Sir,—This is to desire you may publish the inscription I sent you in Faulkner's paper. But say nothing of the author. I must desire you to cause the letters

* A fine youth, the second son of the bishop, whose loss at an early age was thought to have stuck too close to his father's heart.

† Mr. Prior died the 21st of October following, aged 71. The inscription mentioned in the next article was for his monument in Christ-Church cathedral, erected at the expense of Mr. Prior's friends and admirers.

G. B., being the initial letters of my name, to be engraved on the die of the gold medal, at the bottom, beneath the race-horse: whereby mine will be distinguished from medals given by others.

TO THE SAME.

22*nd of Dec.*, 1751. I thank you for the care you have taken in publishing the inscription so correctly, as likewise for your trouble in getting G. B. engraved on the plain at the bottom of the medal. When that is done, you may order two medals to be made, and given as usual. I would have only two made by my die; the multiplying of premiums lessens their value. If my inscription is to take place, let me know before it is engraved: I may perhaps make some trifling alteration.

No date; but sent at this time, to the same. For the particulars of your last favour I give you thanks. I send the above bill to clear what you have expended on my account, and also ten guineas beside, which is my contribution towards the monument which I understand is intended for our deceased friend. Yesterday, though ill of the cholic, yet I could not forbear sketching out the enclosed. I wish it did justice to his character. Such as it is, I submit it to you and your friends.

[Enclosed in the above.]

Memoriæ sacrum
THOMÆ PRIOR
Viri, si quis unquam alius, de patriâ
optimè meriti:
Qui, cum prodesse mallet quàm conspici,
nec in senatum cooptatus
nec consiliorum aulæ particeps
nec ullo publico munere insignitus,
rem tamen publicam
mirificè auxit et ornavit
auspiciis, consiliis, labore indefesso:
Vir innocuus, probus, pius
partium studiis minimè addictus
de re familiare parum solicitus
cum civium commoda unicè spectaret:
quicquid vel ad inopiæ levamen
vel ad vitæ elegantiam facit
quicquid ad desidiam populi vincendam
aut ad bonas artes excitandas pertinet
id omne pro virili excoluit:
Societatis Dubliniensis
auctor, institutor, curator:
Quæ fecerit
pluribus dicere haud refert:
quorsum narraret marmor
illa quæ omnes norunt
illa quæ civium animis inscalpta
nulla dies delebit?

This monument was erected to Thomas Prior, Esquire, at the charge of several persons who contributed to honour the memory of that worthy patriot, to whom his own actions and unwearied endeavours in the service of his country have raised a monument more lasting than marble.

7th of Jan., 1752. I here send you enclosed the inscription. with my last amendments. In the printed copy *Siquis* was one word; it had better be two divided, as in this. There are some other small changes which you will observe. The bishop of Meath was for having somewhat in English: accordingly I subjoin an English addition, to be engraved in a different character and in continued lines (as it is written) beneath the Latin. The bishop writes, that contributions come in slowly, but that near one hundred guineas are got. Now it should seem that if the first plan, rated at two hundred guineas, was reduced or altered, there might be a plain neat monument erected for one hundred guineas, and so (as the proverb directs) the coat be cut according to the cloth.

TO THE REV. MR. GERVAIS, SEN.

Cloyne, 25th of Nov., 1738. Rev. Sir,—My wife sends her compliments to Mrs. Gervais and yourself for the receipt, &c., and we both concur in thanks for your venison. The rain hath so defaced your letter, that I cannot read some parts of it. But I can make a shift to see there is a compliment of so bright a strain, that if I knew how to read it, I am sure I should not know how to answer it. If there was any thing agreeable in your entertainment at my house, it was chiefly owing to yourself, and so requires my acknowledgment, which you have very sincere. You give so much pleasure to others, and are so easily pleased yourself, that I shall live in hopes of your making my house your inn whenever you visit these parts, which will be very agreeable to, &c.

12th of Jan., 1742. You forgot to mention your address; else I should have sooner acknowledged the favour of your letter, for which I am much obliged, though the news it contained had nothing good but the manner of telling it. I had much rather write you a letter of congratulation than of comfort: and yet I must needs tell you for your comfort, that I apprehend you miscarry by having too many friends. We often see a man with one only at his back pushed on and making his way, while another is embarrassed in a crowd of well-wishers. The best of it is, your merits will not be measured by your success. It is an old remark, that the race is not always to the swift. But at present who wins it, matters little: for all protestant clergymen are like soon to be at par, if that old priest* your countryman continues to carrry on his schemes with the same policy and success he has hitherto done. The accounts you send agree with what I hear from other parts; they are all alike dismal. Reserve yourself however for future times, and mind the main

* Cardinal Fleuri, then 87 years old. Dean Gervais was a native of Montpellier, and was carried an infant out of France on the revocation of the edict of Nantes in 1680.

chance. I would say, shun late hours, drink tar-water, and bring back—I wish a good deanery,—but at least a good stock of health and spirits to grace our little parties in Imokilly, where we hope, ere it be long, to see you and the sun returned together. My wife, who values herself on being in the number of your friends, is extremely obliged for the Italian psalms you have procured, and desires me to tell you that the more you can procure, the more she shall be obliged. We join in wishing you many happy new years, health, and success.

2nd of Feb., 1742. I condole with you on your cold, a circumstance that a man of fashion who keeps late hours can hardly escape. We find here that a spoonful, half tar and half honey, taken morning, noon, and night, proves a most effectual remedy in that case. My wife, who values herself on being in your good graces, expresses great gratitude for your care in procuring the psalms, and is doubly pleased with the prospect of your being yourself the bearer. The instrument she desired to be provided was a large four-stringed bass violin: but besides this we shall also be extremely glad to get that excellent bass viol which came from France, be the number of strings what it will. I wrote indeed (not to overload you) to Dean Browne* to look out for a six-stringed bass viol of an old make and mellow tone. But the more we have of good instruments, the better: for I have got an excellent master whom I have taken into my family, and all my children, not excepting my little daughter, learn to play, and are preparing to fill my house with harmony against all events; that if we have worse times, we may have better spirits. Our French woman is grown more attentive to her business, and so much altered for the better, that my wife is not now inclined to part with her: but is nevertheless very sensibly obliged by your kind offer to look out for another. What you say of a certain pamphlet is enigmatical: I shall hope to have it explained *vivâ voce*. As this corner furnishes nothing worth sending, you will pardon me if instead of other news I transcribe a paragraph of a letter I lately received from an English bishop. "We are now shortly to meet again in parliament, and by the proceedings upon the state of the nation Sir Robert's fate will be determined. He is doing all he can to recover a majority in the house of commons, and is said to have succeeded as to some particulars. But in his main attempt, which was that of uniting the prince and his court to the king's, he has been foiled. The bishop of Oxford† was employed to carry the proposal to the prince, which was that he should have the 100,000*l.* a year he had demanded, and his debts paid. But the prince, at the same time that he

* Jemmatt Brown, then dean of Ross, bishop of Killaloe in 1743, of Dromore in 1745, of Cork the same year, of Elphin in 1772, and archbishop of Tuam in 1775: died in 1782.

† Secker.

expressed the utmost respect and duty to his majesty, declared so much dislike to his minister, that without his removal he will hearken to no terms." I have also had another piece in the following words, which is very agreeable. "Lady Dorothy,* whose good temper seems as great as her beauty, and who has gained on every one by her behaviour in these most unhappy circumstances, is said at last to have gained over Lord Euston, and to have entirely won his affection." I find by your letter, the reigning distemper at the Irish court is disappointment. A man of less spirits and alacrity would be apt to cry out, *Spes et fortuna valete*, &c.; but my advice is, never to quit your hopes. Hope is often better than enjoyment. Hope is often the cause as well as the effect of youth. It is certainly a very pleasant and healthy passion. A hopeless person is deserted by himself: and he who forsakes himself is soon forsaken by friends and fortune, both which are sincerely wished you by, &c.

5th of March, 1742. Your last letter, containing an account of the queen of Hungary and her affairs, was all over agreeable. My wife and I are not a little pleased to find her situation so much better than we expected, and greatly applaud your zeal for her interests; though we are divided upon the motive of it. She imagines you would be less zealous, were the queen old and ugly; and will have it that her beauty has set you on fire even at this distance. I on the contrary affirm, that you are not made of such combustible stuff; that you are affected only by the love of justice, and insensible to all other flames than those of patriotism. We hope soon for your presence at Cloyne to put an end to this controversy. Your care in providing the Italian psalms set to music, the four-stringed bass violin, and the antique bass viol, requires our repeated thanks. We had already a bass viol made in Southwark, A.D. 1730, and reputed the best in England. And through your means we are possessed of the best in France. So we have a fair chance for having the two best in Europe. Your letter gives me hopes of a new and prosperous scene. We live in an age of revolutions so sudden and surprising in all parts of Europe, that I question whether the like has been ever known before. Hands are changed at home: it is well if measures are so too. If not, I shall be afraid of this change of hands; for hungry dogs bite deepest. But let those in power look to this. We behold these vicissitudes with an equal eye from this serene corner of Cloyne, where we hope soon to have the perusal of your budget of politics. Meantime accept our service and good wishes.

6th of Sept., 1743. The book which you were so good as to procure for me (and which I shall not pay for till you come to

* Lady Dorothy Boyle, daughter of the earl of Burlington, and wife to Lord Euston, son of the duke of Grafton.

receive the money in person) contains all that part of Dr. Pococke's travels for which I have any curiosity: so I shall, with my thanks for this, give you no further trouble about any other volume. I find by the letter put into my hands by your son (who was so kind as to call here yesterday, but not kind enough to stay a night with us), that you are taken up with great matters, and, like other great men, in danger of overlooking your friends. Prepare however for a world of abuse, both as a courtier and an architect, if you do not find means to wedge in a visit to Cloyne between those two grand concerns. Courtiers you will find none here, and but such virtuosi as the country affords; I mean in the way of music, for that is at present the reigning passion at Cloyne. To be plain, we are musically mad. If you would know what that is, come and see.

29th of Oct., 1743. A bird of the air has told me that your reverence is to be dean of Tuam. No nightingale could have sung a more pleasing song, not even my wife, who, I am told, is this day inferior to no singer in the kingdom. I promise you we are preparing no contemptible chorus to celebrate your preferment: and if you do not believe me, come this Christmas, and believe your own ears. In good earnest, none of your friends will be better pleased to see you with your broad seal in your pocket than your friends at Cloyne. I wish I were able to wish you joy at Dublin; but my health, though not a little mended, suffers me to make no excursions further than a mile or two.—What is this your favourite the queen of Hungary has been doing by her emissaries at Petersburgh? France is again upon her legs. I foresee no good. I wish all this may be vapours and spleen: but I write in sunshine.

8th of Jan., 1744. You have obliged the ladies as well as myself by your candid judgment on the point submitted to your determination. I am glad this matter proved an amusement in your gout by bringing you acquainted with several curious and select trials,* which I should readily purchase and accept your kind offer of procuring them, if I did not apprehend there might be some among them of too delicate a nature to be read by boys and girls, to whom my library, and particularly all French books, are open.—As to foreign affairs, we cannot descry or prognosticate any good event from this remote corner. The planets that seemed propitious are now retrograde: Russia, Sweden, and Prussia lost; and the Dutch a nominal ally at best. You may now admire the queen of Hungary without a rival: her conduct with respect to the Czarina and the Marquis de Botta hath, I fear, rendered cold the hearts of her friends, and their hands feeble. To be plain, from this time forward I doubt we shall languish, and our enemies take heart. And while I am

* Collection of Trials in France, published under the title Causes Célèbres.

thus perplexed about foreign affairs, my private economy (I mean the animal economy) is disordered by the sciatica; an evil which has attended me for some time past; and I apprehend will not leave me till the return of the sun. Certainly the news that I want to hear at present is not from Rome, or Paris, or Vienna, but from Dublin; viz. when the dean of Tuam is declared, and when he receives the congratulations of his friends. I constantly read the news from Dublin; but lest I should overlook this article, I take upon me to congratulate you at this moment; that as my good wishes were not, so my compliments may not be behind those of your other friends. You have entertained me with so many curious things, that I would fain send something in return worth reading. But as this quarter affords nothing from itself, I must be obliged to transcribe a bit of an English letter that I received last week. It relates to what is now the subject of public attention, the Hanover troops, and is as follows. "General Campbell (a thorough courtier), being called upon in the House of Commons to give an account whether he had not observed some instances of partiality, replied he could not say he had: but this he would say, that he thought the forces of the two nations could never draw together again. This, coming from the mouth of a courtier, was looked on as an ample confession: however, it was carried against the address by a large majority. Had the question been whether the Hanover troops should be continued, it would not have been a debate: but it being well known that the contrary had been resolved upon before the meeting of parliament, the moderate part of the opposition thought it was unnecessary and might prove hurtful to address about it, and so voted with the court." You see how I am forced to lengthen out my letter by adding a borrowed scrap of news, which yet probably is no news to you. But though I should show you nothing new, yet you must give me leave to show my inclination at least to acquit myself of the debts I owe you, and to declare myself, &c.

16*th of March*, 1744. I think myself a piece of a prophet when I foretold that the pretender's cardinal feigned to aim at your head, when he meant to strike you, like a skilful fencer, on the ribs. It is true, one would hardly think the French such bunglers: but this popish priest hath manifestly bungled so as to repair the breaches our own bunglers had made at home. This is the luckiest thing that could have happened, and will, I hope, confound all the measures of our enemies.—I was much obliged and delighted with the good news you lately sent, which was yesterday confirmed by letters from Dublin. And though particulars are not yet known, I did not think fit to delay our public marks of joy, as a great bonfire before my gate, firing of guns, drinking of healths, &c. I was very glad of this opportu-

nity to put a little spirit into our drooping protestants of Cloyne, who have, of late, conceived no small fears on seeing themselves in such a defenceless condition among so great a number of papists, elated with the fame of these new enterprises in their favour. It is, indeed, terrible to reflect, that we have neither arms nor militia in a province where the papists are eight to one, and have an earlier intelligence than we have of what passes; by what means I know not, but the fact is certainly true.—Good Mr. Dean (for dean I will call you, resolving not to be behind your friends in Dublin), you must know, that to us who live in this remote corner, many things seem strange and unaccountable that may be solved by you who are near the fountain head. Why are draughts made from our forces when we most want them? Why are not the militia arrayed? How comes it to pass that arms are not put into the hands of protestants, especially since they have been so long paid for? Did not our ministers know, for a long time past, that a squadron was forming at Brest? Why did they not then bruise the cockatrice in the egg? Would not the French works at Dunkirk have justified this step? Why was Sir John Norris called off from the chace when he had his enemies in full view, and was even at their heels with a superior force? As we have 240 men of war, whereof 120 are of the line, how comes it that we did not appoint a squadron to watch and intercept the Spanish admiral with his thirty millions of pieces of eight? In an age, wherein articles of religious faith are canvassed with the utmost freedom, we think it lawful to propose these scruples in our political faith, which, in many points, wants to be enlightened and set right.—Your last was writ by the hand of a fair lady, to whom both my wife and I send our compliments, as well as to yourself: I wish you joy of being able to write yourself. My cholic is changed to gout and sciatica, the tar-water having drove it into my limbs, and as I hope, carrying it off by those ailments, which are nothing to the cholic.

6th of Jan., 1745. Two days ago I was favoured with a very agreeable visit from Baron Mounteney and Mr. Bristow. I hear they have taken Lismore in their way to Dublin.—We want a little of your foreign fire to raise our Irish spirits in this heavy season. This makes your purpose of coming very agreeable news. We will chop politics together, sing *Io Pæan* to the duke, revile the Dutch, admire the king of Sardinia, and applaud the earl of Chesterfield, whose name is sacred all over this island except Lismore; and what should put your citizens of Lismore out of humour with his excellency I cannot comprehend. But the discussion of these points must be deferred to your wished-for arrival.

6th of Feb., 1745. You say you carried away regret from

Cloyne. I assure you that you did not carry it all away: there was a good share of it left with us; which was on the following news-day increased upon hearing the fate of your niece. My wife could not read this piece of news without tears, though her knowledge of that amiable young lady was no more than one day's acquaintance. Her mournful widower is beset with many temporal blessings: but the loss of such a wife must be long felt through them all. Complete happiness is not to be hoped for on this side Gascony. All those who are not Gascons must have a corner of woe to creep out at, and to comfort themselves with at parting from this world. Certainly, if we had nothing to make us uneasy here, heaven itself would be less wished for. But I should remember I am writing to a philosopher and divine; so shall turn my thoughts to politics, concluding with this sad reflection, that, happen what will, I see the Dutch are still to be favourites, though I much apprehend the hearts of some warm friends may be lost at home by endeavouring to gain the affections of those lukewarm neighbours.

3rd of June, 1745. I congratulate with you on the success of your late dose of physic. The gout, as Dr. Sydenham styles it, is *amarissimum naturæ pharmacum.* It throws off a sharp excrement from the blood to the limbs and extremities of the body, and is not less useful than painful. I think, Mr. Dean, you have paid for the gay excursion you made last winter to the metropolis and the court. And yet, such is the condition of mortals, I foresee you will forget the pain next winter, and return to the same course of life which brought it on.—As to our warlike achievements, if I were to rate our successes by our merits, I could forebode little good. But if we are sinners, our enemies are no saints. It is my opinion we shall heartily maul one another, without any signal advantage on either side. How the sullen English squires, who pay the piper, will like this dance, I cannot tell. For my own part, I cannot help thinking, that land-expeditions are but ill suited either to the force or interest of England; and that our friends would do more, if we did less, on the continent.—Were I to send my son from home, I assure you there is no one to whose prudent care and good nature I would sooner trust him than yours. But as I am his physician, I think myself obliged to keep him with me. Besides, as after so long an illness his constitution is very delicate, I imagine this warm vale of Cloyne is better suited to it than your lofty and exposed situation of Lismore. Nevertheless my wife and I are extremely obliged by your kind offer, and concur in our hearty thanks for it.

24th of Nov., 1745. You are in for life. Not all the philosophers have been saying these three thousand years, on the vanity of riches, the cares of greatness, and the brevity of

human life, will be able to reclaim you. However, as it is observed, that most men have patience enough to bear the misfortunes of others, I am resolved not to break my heart for my old friend, if you should prove so unfortunate as to be made a bishop.—The reception you met with from Lord Chesterfield was perfectly agreeable to his excellency's character, who, being so *clair-voyant* in every thing else, could not be supposed blind to your merit.—Your friends, the Dutch, have showed themselves what I always took them to be, selfish and ungenerous. To crown all, we are now told the forces they sent us have private orders not to fight: I hope we shall not want them.—By the letter you favoured me with, I find the regents of our university have shown their loyalty at the expense of their wit. The poor dead Dean,* though no idolater of the whigs, was no more a Jacobite than Dr. Baldwin. And had he been even a papist, what then? Wit is of no party.—We have been alarmed with a report, that a great body of rapparees is up in the county of Killkenny: these are looked on by some as the forerunners of an insurrection. In opposition to this, our militia have been arrayed, that is, sworn: but alas! we want not oaths, we want muskets. I have bought up all I could get, and provided horses and arms for four and twenty of the protestants of Cloyne, which, with a few more that can furnish themselves, make up a troop of thirty horse. This seemed necessary to keep off rogues in these doubtful times.—May we hope to gain a sight of you in the recess? Were I as able to go to town, how readily should I wait on my lord lieutenant and the dean of Tuam. Your letters are so much tissue of gold and silver: in return I am forced to send you from this corner a patch-work of tailor's shreds, for which I entreat your compassion, and that you will believe me, &c.

24th of Feb., 1746. I am heartily sensible of your loss, which yet admits of alleviation, not only from the common motives which have been repeated every day for upwards of five thousand years, but also from your own peculiar knowledge of the world and the variety of distresses which occur in all ranks, from the highest to the lowest: I may add too, from the peculiar times in which we live, which seem to threaten still more wretched and unhappy times to come.

* Immediately after Dean Swift's death, the class of Senior Sophisters, in the college of Dublin, determined to apply a sum of money, raised among themselves, and usually expended on an entertainment, to the purpose of honouring the memory of that great man, by a bust to be set up in the college library. Provost Baldwin, being a staunch whig, and having once smarted by an epigram of the dean's, it was confidently thought, would have refused his consent to this measure, and the talk of the town about this time was, that the board of Senior Fellows would enter implicitly into the same sentiments. But the event soon proved the falsehood of such an unworthy report: the bust was admitted without the least opposition, and is now in the library.

Aetas parentum pejor avis tulit
Nos nequiores, mox daturos
Progeniem vitiosiorem.

Nor is it a small advantage that you have a peculiar resource against distress from the gaiety of your own temper. Such is the hypochondriac, melancholy complexion of us islanders, that we seem made of butter, every accident makes such a deep impression upon us; but those elastic spirits which are your birthright cause the strokes of fortune to rebound without leaving a trace behind them: though for a time there is and will be a gloom, which, I agree with your friends, is best dispelled at the court and metropolis amidst a variety of faces and amusements. I wish I was able to go with you, and pay my duty to the lord lieutenant: but alas! the disorder I had this winter and my long retreat have disabled me for the road, and disqualified me for a court. But if I see you not in Dublin, which I wish I may be able to do, I shall hope to see you at Cloyne when you can be spared from better company. These sudden changes and tossings from side to side betoken a fever in the state. But whatever ails the body politic, take care of your own bodily health, and let no anxious cares break in upon it.

8th of Nov., 1746. Your letter, with news from the Castle, found me in bed, confined by the gout. In answer to which news I can only say, that I neither expect nor wish for any dignity higher than what I am encumbered with at present.—That which more nearly concerns me is my credit, which I am glad to find so well supported by Admiral Lestock. I had promised you that before the first of November he would take king Lewis by the beard. Now Quimpercorrentin, Quimperlay, and Quimperen, being certain extreme parts or excrescencies of his kingdom, may not improperly be styled the beard of France. In proof of his having been there, he has plundered the wardrobes of the peasants, and imported a great number of old petticoats, waistcoats, wooden shoes, and one shirt, all which are actually sold at Cove: the shirt was bought by a man of this town for a groat. And if you won't believe me, come and believe your own eyes. In case you doubt either the facts or the reasonings, I am ready to make them good, being now well on my feet, and longing to triumph over you at Cloyne, which I hope will be soon.

6th of April, 1752. Your letter by last post was very agreeable: but the trembling hand with which it was written is a drawback from the satisfaction I should otherwise have had in hearing from you. If my advice had been taken, you would have escaped so many miserable months in the gout and the bad air of Dublin. But advice against inclination is seldom successful. Mine was very sincere, though I must own a little

interested: for we often wanted your enlivening company to dissipate the gloom of Cloyne. This I look on as enjoying France at second hand. I wish any thing but the gout could fix you among us. But bustle and intrigue and great affairs have and will, as long as you exist on this globe, fix your attention. For my own part, I submit to years and infirmities. My views in this world are mean and narrow: it is a thing in which I have small share, and which ought to give me small concern. I abhor business, and especially to have to do with great persons and great affairs, which I leave to such as you who delight in them and are fit for them. The evening of life I choose to pass in a quiet retreat. Ambitious projects, intrigues and quarrels of statesmen, are things I have been formerly amused with; but they now seem to me a vain, fugitive dream. If you thought as I do, we should have more of your company, and you less of the gout. We have not those transports of you castle-hunters; but our lives are calm and serene. We do however long to see you open your budget of politics by our fire-side. My wife and all here salute you, and send you, instead of compliments, their best sincere wishes for your health and safe return. The part you take in my son's recovery is very obliging to us all, and particularly to, &c.

G. CLOYNE.

A TREATISE

CONCERNING THE

PRINCIPLES OF HUMAN KNOWLEDGE,

WHEREIN

THE CHIEF CAUSES OF ERROR AND DIFFICULTY IN THE SCIENCES, WITH THE GROUNDS OF SCEPTICISM, ATHEISM, AND IRRELIGION, ARE INQUIRED INTO.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

THOMAS, EARL OF PEMBROKE, &c.

KNIGHT OF THE MOST NOBLE ORDER OF THE GARTER, AND ONE OF THE LORDS OF HER MAJESTY'S MOST HONOURABLE PRIVY COUNCIL.

My Lord,

You will, perhaps, wonder that an obscure person, who has not the honour to be known to your lordship, should presume to address you in this manner. But that a man, who has written something with a design to promote useful knowledge and religion in the world, should make choice of your lordship for his patron, will not be thought strange by any one that is not altogether unacquainted with the present state of the church and learning, and consequently ignorant how great an ornament and support you are to both. Yet, nothing could have induced me to make you this present of my poor endeavours, were I not encouraged by that candour and native goodness, which is so bright a part in your lordship's character. I might add, my lord, that the extraordinary favour and bounty you have been pleased to show towards our society, gave me hopes, you would not be unwilling to countenance the studies of one of its members. These considerations determined me to lay this treatise at your lordship's feet. And the rather, because I was ambitious to have it known, that I am, with the truest and most profound respect, on account of that learning and virtue which the world so justly admires in your lordship,

My Lord,

Your lordship's most humble and most devoted servant,

George Berkeley.

PREFACE.

WHAT I here make public has, after a long and scrupulous inquiry, seemed to me evidently true, and not unuseful to be known, particularly to those who are tainted with scepticism, or want a demonstration of the existence and immateriality of God, or the natural immortality of the soul. Whether it be so or no, I am content the reader should impartially examine. Since I do not think myself any further concerned for the success of what I have written than as it is agreeable to truth. But to the end this may not suffer, I make it my request that the reader suspend his judgment till he has once, at least, read the whole through with that degree of attention and thought which the subject matter shall seem to deserve. For as there are some passages that, taken by themselves, are very liable (nor could it be remedied) to gross misinterpretation, and to be charged with most absurd consequences, which, nevertheless, upon an entire perusal will appear not to follow from them: so likewise, though the whole should be read over, yet if this be done transiently, it is very probable my sense may be mistaken; but to a thinking reader, I flatter myself, it will be throughout clear and obvious. As for the characters of novelty and singularity, which some of the following notions may seem to bear, it is, I hope, needless to make any apology on that account. He must surely be either very weak, or very little acquainted with the sciences, who shall reject a truth that is capable of demonstration, for no other reason but because it is newly known and contrary to the prejudices of mankind. Thus much I thought fit to premise, in order to prevent, if possible, the hasty censures of a sort of men, who are too apt to condemn an opinion before they rightly comprehend it.

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INTRODUCTION.

I. PHILOSOPHY being nothing else but *the study of wisdom and truth*, it may with reason be expected, that those who have spent most time and pains in it should enjoy a greater calm and serenity of mind, a greater clearness and evidence of knowledge, and be less disturbed with doubts and difficulties than other men. Yet so it is, we see the illiterate bulk of mankind, that walk the high road of plain, common sense, and are governed by the dictates of nature, for the most part easy and undisturbed. [To them nothing *that is familiar* appears unaccountable or difficult to comprehend.] They complain not of any want of evidence in their senses, and are out of all danger of becoming *sceptics*. But no sooner do we depart from sense and instinct to follow the light of a superior principle, to reason, meditate, and reflect on the nature of things, but a thousand scruples spring up in our minds, concerning those things which before we seemed fully to comprehend. Prejudices and errors of sense do from all parts discover themselves to our view; and endeavouring to correct these by reason, we are insensibly drawn into uncouth paradoxes, difficulties, and inconsistences, which multiply and grow upon us as we advance in speculation; till at length, having wandered through many intricate mazes, we find ourselves just where we were, or, which is worse, sit down in a forlorn scepticism.

II. [The cause of this is thought to be (1) the obscurity of things, or the natural weakness and imperfection of our understandings.] It is said the faculties we have are few, and those designed by nature for the *support* and comfort (pleasure) of life, and not to penetrate into the *inward essence* and constitution of things. [Besides, (2) the mind of man being finite, when it treats of things which partake of infinity, it is not to be wondered at if it run into absurdities and contradictions; out of which it is impossible it should ever extricate itself, it being of the nature of infinite not to be comprehended by that which is finite.]

III. But perhaps we may be too partial to ourselves in placing the fault originally in our faculties, and not rather in the wrong use we make of them. *It is a hard thing to suppose, that right deductions from true principles should ever end in consequences which*

cannot be maintained or made consistent. We should believe that God has dealt more bountifully with the sons of men, than to give them a strong desire for that knowledge which he had placed quite out of their reach. [This were not agreeable to the wonted indulgent methods of Providence, which, whatever appetites it may have implanted in the creatures, doth usually furnish them with such means as, if rightly made use of, will not fail to satisfy them.] Upon the whole I am inclined to think that the far greater part, if not all, of those difficulties which have hitherto amused philosophers, and blocked up the way to knowledge, are entirely owing to ourselves. That we have first raised a dust, and then complain, we cannot see.

IV. My purpose therefore is, to try if I can discover what those principles are, which have introduced all that doubtfulness and uncertainty, those absurdities and contradictions into the several sects of philosophy; insomuch that the wisest men have thought our ignorance incurable, conceiving it to arise from the natural dulness and limitation of our faculties. And surely it is a work well deserving our pains, to make a strict inquiry concerning the first principles of human knowledge, to sift and examine them on all sides: especially since there may be some grounds to suspect that those lets and difficulties, which stay and embarrass the mind in its search after truth, do not spring from any darkness and intricacy in the objects, or natural defect in the understanding, so much as from false principles which have been insisted on, and might have been avoided.

V. How difficult and discouraging soever this attempt may seem, when I consider how many great and extraordinary men have gone before me in the same designs: yet I am not without some hopes, upon the consideration that the largest views are not always the clearest, and that he who is shortsighted will be obliged to draw the object nearer, and may, perhaps, by a close and narrow survey discern that which had escaped far better eyes.

VI. *A chief source of error in all parts of knowledge.*—In order to prepare the mind of the reader for the easier conceiving what follows, it is proper to premise somewhat, by way of introduction, concerning the nature and abuse of language. But the unravelling this matter leads me in some measure to anticipate my design, by taking notice of what seems to have had a chief part in rendering speculation intricate and perplexed, and to have occasioned innumerable errors and difficulties in almost all parts of knowledge. [And that is the opinion that the mind hath a power of framing *abstract ideas* or notions of things.] He who is not a perfect stranger to the writings and disputes of philosophers, must needs acknowledge that no small part of them are spent about abstract ideas. [These are, in a more especial manner, thought to be the object of those sciences which go by the

name of *logic* and *metaphysics*,] and of all that which passes under the notion of the most abstracted and sublime learning, in all which one shall scarce find any question handled in such a manner, as does not suppose their existence in the mind, and that it is well acquainted with them.

VII. *Proper acceptation of abstraction.*—It is agreed, on all hands, that the qualities or modes of things do never *really exist each of them apart by itself*, and separated from all others, but are mixed, as it were, and blended together, several in the same object. But we are told, the mind being able to consider each quality singly, or abstracted from those other qualities with which it is united, does by that means frame to itself abstract ideas. For example, there is perceived by sight an object extended, coloured, and moved: this mixed or compound idea the mind resolving into its simple, constituent parts, and viewing each by itself, exclusive of the rest, does frame the abstract ideas of extension, colour, and motion. Not that it is possible for colour or motion to exist without extension: but only that the mind can frame to itself by *abstraction* the idea of colour exclusive of extension, and of motion exclusive of both colour and extension.

VIII. *Of generalizing.**—Again, the mind having observed that in the particular extensions perceived by sense, there is something *common* and alike *in all*, and some other things peculiar, as this or that figure or magnitude, which distinguish them one from another; it considers apart or singles out by itself that which is common, making thereof a most abstract idea of extension, which is neither line, surface, nor solid, nor has any figure or magnitude, but is an idea entirely prescinded from all these. So likewise the mind, by leaving out of the particular colours perceived by sense, that which distinguishes them one from another, and retaining that only which is *common to all*, makes an idea of colour in abstract, which is neither red, nor blue, nor white, nor any other determinate colour. And in like manner, by considering motion abstractedly not only from the body moved, but likewise from the figure it describes, and all particular directions and velocities, the abstract idea of motion is framed; which equally corresponds to all particular motions whatsoever that may be perceived by sense.

IX. *Of compounding.*—And as the mind frames to itself abstract ideas of qualities or *modes*, so does it, by the same precision or mental separation, attain abstract ideas of the more compounded *beings*, which include several coexistent qualities. For example, the mind having observed that Peter, James, and John resemble each other, in certain common agreements of shape and other qualities, leaves out of the complex or compounded idea it has of Peter, James, and any other particular

* Vide Reid, on the Intellectual Powers of Man, Essay V. chap. iii. sec. 1. edit. 1843.

man, that which is peculiar to each, retaining only what is common to all; and so makes an abstract idea wherein all the particulars equally partake, abstracting entirely from and cutting off all those circumstances and differences, which might determine it to any particular existence. And after this manner it is said we come by the abstract idea of *man*, or, if you please, humanity or human nature; wherein it is true there is included colour, because there is no man but has some colour, but then it can be neither white, nor black, nor any particular colour; because there is no one particular colour wherein all men partake. So likewise there is included stature, but then it is neither tall stature nor low stature, nor yet middle stature, but something abstracted from all these. And so of the rest. Moreover, there being a great variety of other creatures that partake in some parts, but not all, of the complex idea of *man*, the mind leaving out those parts which are peculiar to men, and retaining those only which are common to all the living creatures, frameth the idea of *animal*, which abstracts not only from all particular men, but also all birds, beasts, fishes, and insects. The constituent parts of the abstract idea of animal are body, life, sense, and spontaneous motion. By *body* is meant, body without any particular shape or figure, there being no one shape or figure common to all animals, without covering, either of hair or feathers, or scales, &c., nor yet naked: hair, feathers, scales, and nakedness being the distinguishing properties of particular animals, and for that reason left out of the *abstract idea*. Upon the same account the spontaneous motion must be neither walking, nor flying, nor creeping; it is nevertheless a motion, but what that motion is, it is not easy to conceive.*

X. *Two objections to the existence of abstract ideas.*—Whether others have this wonderful faculty of *abstracting their ideas*, they best can tell: for myself I find indeed I have a faculty of imagining, or representing to myself the ideas of those particular things I have perceived, and of variously compounding and dividing them. I can imagine a man with two heads, or the upper parts of a man joined to the body of a horse. I can consider the hand, the eye, the nose, each by itself abstracted or separated from the rest of the body. But then whatever hand or eye I imagine, it must have some particular shape and colour. Likewise the idea of man that I frame to myself, must be either of a white, or a black, or a tawny, a straight, or a crooked, a tall, or a low, or a middle-sized man. I cannot by any effort of thought conceive the abstract idea above described. And it is equally impossible for me to form the abstract idea of motion distinct from the body moving, and which is neither swift nor slow, curvilinear nor rectilinear; and the like may be said of all

* Vide Hobbes' Tripos, ch. v. sect. 6.

other abstract general ideas whatsoever. To be plain, [I own myself able to abstract *in one sense*, as when I consider some particular parts or qualities separated from others, with which though they are united in some object, yet it is possible they may really exist without them. But I deny that I can abstract one from another, or conceive separately, those qualities which it is impossible should exist so separated; or that I can frame a general notion by abstracting from particulars in the manner aforesaid. Which two last are the proper acceptations of *abstraction.*] And there are grounds to think most men will acknowledge themselves to be in my case. The generality of men which are simple and illiterate never pretend to *abstract notions.* [(1) It is said they are difficult, and not to be attained without pains and study. We may therefore reasonably conclude that, if such there be, they are confined only to the learned.]

XI. I proceed to examine what can be alleged in *defence of the doctrine of abstraction*, and try if I can discover what it is that inclines the men of speculation to embrace an opinion so remote from common sense as that seems to be. There has been a late deservedly esteemed philosopher, who, no doubt, has given it very much countenance by seeming to think the having abstract general ideas is what puts the widest difference in point of understanding betwixt man and beast. "The having of general ideas," saith he, "is that which puts a perfect distinction betwixt man and brutes, and is an excellency which the faculties of brutes do by no means attain unto. For it is evident we observe no footsteps in them of making use of general signs for universal ideas; from which we have reason to imagine that they have not the faculty of *abstracting*, or making general ideas, since they have no use of words or any other general signs." And a little after: "Therefore, I think, we may suppose that it is in this that the species of brutes are discriminated from men, and it is that proper difference wherein they are wholly separated, and which at last widens to so wide a distance. For if they have any ideas at all, and are not bare machines (as some would have them), we cannot deny them to have some reason. It seems as evident to me that they do some of them in certain instances reason as that they have sense, but it is only in particular ideas, just as they receive them from their senses. They are the best of them tied up within those narrow bounds, and have not (as I think) the faculty to enlarge them by any kind of *abstraction.*" Essay on Hum. Underst., b. ii. ch. xi. sect. 10, 11. I readily agree with this learned author, that the faculties of brutes can by no means attain to *abstraction.* But then if this be made the distinguishing property of that sort of animals, I fear a great many of those that pass for men must be reckoned

into their number. The reason that is here assigned why we have no grounds to think brutes have abstract general ideas, is that we observe in them no use of words or any other general signs; [which is built on this supposition, to wit, that the making use of words implies the having general ideas.] From which it follows, that men who use language are able to *abstract* or *generalize* their ideas. That this is the sense and arguing of the author will further appear by his answering the question he in another place puts. "Since all things that exist are only particulars, how come we by general terms?" His answer is, "Words become general by being made the signs of general ideas." Essay on Hum. Underst., b. iii. ch. iii. sect. 6. But* it seems that [(2) a word becomes general by being made the sign, not of an *abstract* general idea, but of several particular ideas,† any one of which it indifferently suggests to the mind.] For example, when it is said *the change of motion is proportional to the impressed force*, or that *whatever has extension is divisible;* these propositions are to be understood of motion and extension in general, and nevertheless it will not follow that they suggest to my thoughts an idea of motion without a body moved, or any determinate direction and velocity, or that I must conceive an abstract general idea of extension, which is neither line, surface, nor solid, neither great nor small, black, white, nor red, nor of any other determinate colour. It is only implied that whatever motion I consider, whether it be swift or slow, perpendicular, horizontal, or oblique, or in whatever object, the axiom concerning it holds equally true. As does the other of every particular extension, it matters not whether line, surface, or solid, whether of this or that magnitude or figure.

XII. *Existence of general ideas admitted.*—By observing how ideas become general, we may the better judge how words are made so. And here it is to be noted that I do not deny absolutely there are general ideas, but only that there are any *abstract general ideas:* for in the passages above quoted, wherein there is mention of general ideas, it is always supposed that they are formed by *abstraction*, after the manner set forth in Sect. VIII. and IX. Now if we will annex a meaning to our words, and speak only of what we can conceive, I believe we shall acknowledge, that an idea, which considered in itself is particular, becomes general, by being made to represent or stand for all other particular ideas of the *same sort.* ☞ To make this plain by an example, suppose a geometrician is demonstrating the method of cutting a line in two equal parts. He draws, for instance, a black line of an inch in length; this, which in itself is a particular line, is nevertheless with regard to its signification

* "*To this I cannot assent, being of opinion,*" edit. of 1710.

† Of the same sort.

general, since, as it is there used, it represents all particular lines whatsoever; so that what is demonstrated of it, is demonstrated of all lines, or, in other words, of a line in general. And as that particular line becomes general, by being made a sign, so the name *line*, which taken absolutely is *particular*, by being a sign is made *general*. And as the former owes its generality, not to its being the sign of an abstract or general line, but of *all particular* right lines that may possibly exist; so the latter must be thought to derive its generality from the same cause, namely, the *various particular* lines which it indifferently denotes.*

XIII. *Abstract general ideas necessary, according to Locke.*—To give the reader a yet clearer view of the nature of abstract ideas, and the uses they are thought necessary to, I shall add one more passage out of the Essay on Human Understanding, which is as follows. "*Abstract ideas* are not so obvious or easy to children or the yet unexercised mind as particular ones. If they seem so to grown men, it is only because by constant and familiar use they are made so. For when we nicely reflect upon them, we shall find that general ideas are fictions and contrivances of the mind, that carry difficulty with them, and do not so easily offer themselves as we are apt to imagine. For example, does it not require some pains and skill to form the general idea of a triangle? (which is yet none of the most abstract, comprehensive, and difficult;) for it must be neither oblique nor rectangle, neither equilateral, equicrural, nor scalenon, but *all and none* of these at once. In effect, it is something imperfect that cannot exist, an idea wherein some parts of several different and *inconsistent* ideas are put together. It is true the mind in this imperfect state has need of such ideas, and makes all the haste to them it can, for the (1) *conveniency of communication and* (2) *enlargement of knowledge*, to both which it is naturally very much inclined. But yet one has reason to suspect such ideas are marks of our imperfection. At least this is enough to show that the most abstract and general ideas are not those that the mind is first and most easily acquainted with, nor such as its earliest knowledge is conversant about." Book iv. ch. vii. sect. 9. If any man has the faculty of framing in his mind such an idea of a triangle as is here described, it is in vain to pretend to dispute him out of it, nor would I go about it. All I desire is, that the reader would fully and certainly inform himself whether he has such an idea or no. And this, methinks, can be no hard task for any one to perform. What more easy than for any one to look a little into his own thoughts, and there try

* "I look upon this (doctrine) to be one of the greatest and most valuable discoveries that have been made of late years in the republic of letters."—Treatise of Human Nature, book i. part i. sect. 7. Also Stewart's Philosophy of the Mind, part i. ch. iv. sect. iii. p. 99.

whether he has, or can attain to have, an idea that shall correspond with the description that is here given of the general idea of a triangle, which is, *neither oblique, nor rectangle, equilateral, equicrural, nor scalenon, but all and none of these at once?*

XIV. *But they are not necessary for communication.*—Much is here said of the difficulty that abstract ideas carry with them, and the pains and skill requisite to the forming them. And it is on all hands agreed that there is need of great toil and labour of the mind, to emancipate our thoughts from particular objects, and raise them to those sublime speculations that are conversant about abstract ideas. [From all which the natural consequence should seem to be, that so *difficult* a thing as the forming abstract ideas was not necessary for *communication*, which is so *easy* and familiar to *all sorts of men.*] But we are told, if they seem obvious and easy to grown men, *it is only because by constant and familiar use they are made so.* [Now I would fain know at what time it is men are employed in surmounting that difficulty, and furnishing themselves with those necessary helps for discourse. It cannot be when they are grown up, for then it seems they are not conscious of any such pains-taking; it remains therefore to be the business of their childhood. And surely, the great and multiplied labour of framing abstract notions will be found a hard task for that tender age.] ☞ Is it not a hard thing to imagine, that a couple of children cannot prate together of their sugar-plums, and rattles, and the rest of their little trinkets, till they have first tacked together numberless inconsistencies, and so framed in their minds *abstract general ideas*, and annexed them to every common name they make use of?

XV. *Nor for the enlargement of knowledge.*—Nor do I think them a whit more needful for the *enlargement of knowledge* than for *communication.* It is, I know, a point much insisted on, that all knowledge and demonstration are about universal notions, to which I fully agree: but then it doth not appear to me that those notions are formed by *abstraction* in the manner premised; [*universality*, so far as I can comprehend, not consisting in the absolute, *positive* nature or conception of any thing, but in the *relation* it bears to the particulars signified or represented by it:] by virtue whereof it is that things, names, or notions, being in their own nature *particular*, are rendered *universal.* Thus when I demonstrate any proposition concerning triangles, it is to be supposed that I have in view the universal idea of a triangle; which ought not to be understood as if I could frame an idea of a triangle which was neither equilateral, nor scalenon, nor equicrural. But only that the particular triangle I consider, whether of this or that sort it matters not, doth equally stand for and represent all rectilinear triangles whatsoever, and is, in that sense, *universal.* All which seems very plain, and not to include any difficulty in it.

XVI. *Objection.—Answer.*—But here it will be demanded, *how we can know any proposition to be true of all particular triangles, except* we have first seen it *demonstrated of the abstract idea of a triangle* which equally agrees to all? For because a property may be demonstrated to agree to some one particular triangle, it will not thence follow that it equally belongs to any other triangle, which in all respects is not the same with it. For example, having demonstrated that the three angles of an isosceles rectangular triangle are equal to two right ones, I cannot therefore conclude this affection agrees to all other triangles, which have neither a right angle, nor two equal sides. It seems therefore that, to be certain this proposition is universally true, we must either make a particular demonstration for every particular triangle, which is impossible, or once for all demonstrate it of the *abstract idea of a triangle*, in which all the particulars do indifferently partake, and by which they are all equally represented. To which I answer, that though the idea I have in view whilst I make the demonstration, be, for instance, that of an isosceles rectangular triangle, whose sides are of a determinate length, I may nevertheless be certain it extends to all other rectilinear triangles, of what sort or bigness soever. [And that, because neither the right angle, nor the equality, nor determinate length of the sides, are at all concerned in the demonstration.] It is true, the diagram I have in view includes all these particulars, but then there is not the least mention made of them in the proof of the proposition. It is not said, the three angles are equal to two right ones, because one of them is a right angle, or because the sides comprehending it are of the same length. Which sufficiently shows that the right angle might have been oblique, and the sides unequal, and for all that the demonstration have held good. And for this reason it is, that I conclude that to be true of any obliquangular or scalenon, which I had demonstrated of a particular right-angled, equicrural triangle; and not because I demonstrated the proposition of the abstract idea of a triangle. [*And here it must be acknowledged, that a man may consider a figure merely as triangular, without attending to the particular qualities of the angles, or relations of the sides. So far he may abstract: but this will never prove that he can frame an abstract general inconsistent idea of a triangle. In like manner we may consider Peter so far forth as man, or so far forth as animal, without framing the forementioned abstract idea, either of man or of animal, inasmuch as all that is perceived is not considered.]

XVII. *Advantage of investigating the doctrine of abstract general ideas.*—It were an endless, as well as a useless thing, to

* The passage here enclosed by brackets does not appear in the edition of 1710.

trace the *schoolmen*, those great masters of abstraction, through all the manifold, inextricable labyrinths of error and dispute, which their doctrine of abstract natures and notions seems to have led them into. What bickerings and controversies, and what a learned dust have been raised about those matters, and what mighty advantage hath been from thence derived to mankind, are things at this day too clearly known to need being insisted on. And it had been well if the ill effects of that doctrine were confined to those only who make the most avowed profession of it. When men consider the great pains, industry, and parts, that have, for so many ages, been laid out on the cultivation and advancement of the sciences, and that notwithstanding all this, the far greater part of them remain full of darkness and uncertainty, and disputes that are like never to have an end, and even those that are thought to be supported by the most clear and cogent demonstrations, contain in them paradoxes which are perfectly irreconcilable to the understandings of men, and that, taking all together, a small portion of them doth supply any real benefit to mankind, otherwise than by being an innocent diversion and amusement: I say, the consideration of all this is apt to throw them into a despondency, and perfect contempt of all study. But this may perhaps cease, upon a view of the false principles that have obtained in the world, amongst all which there is none, methinks, hath a more wide influence over the thoughts of speculative men, than * this of abstract general ideas.

XVIII. [I come now to consider the *source of this prevailing notion*, and that seems to me to be *language*. And surely nothing of less extent than reason itself could have been the source of an opinion so universally received.] The truth of this appears as from other reasons, so also from the plain confession of the ablest patrons of abstract ideas, [who acknowledge that they are made in order to naming; from which it is a clear consequence, that if there had been no such thing as speech or universal signs, there never had been any thought of abstraction.] See book iii. ch. vi. sect. 39, and elsewhere, of the Essay on Human Understanding. Let us therefore examine the manner wherein words have contributed to the origin of that mistake. [First,† then, it is thought that every name hath, or ought to have, *one only* precise and settled signification, which inclines men to think there are certain *abstract, determinate ideas*, which constitute the true and only immediate signification of each general name. And that it is by the mediation of these abstract ideas, that a general name comes to signify any particular thing.] [Whereas, in truth, there is no such thing as one precise and definite signification annexed to any general

* "That we have been endeavouring to overthrow."—Edit. 1710.

† Vide sect. xix.

name, they all signifying indifferently a great number of particular ideas.] All which doth evidently follow from what has been already said, and will clearly appear to any one by a little reflection. [To this it will be *objected*, that every name that has a definition, is thereby restrained to one certain signification.] For example, a *triangle* is defined to be a *plain surface comprehended by three right lines;* by which that name is limited to denote one certain idea and no other. To which I answer, that in the definition it is not said whether the surface be great or small, black or white, nor whether the sides are long or short, equal or unequal, nor with what angles they are inclined to each other; in all which there may be great variety, [and consequently there is *no one settled idea* which limits the signification of the word *triangle.*] [It is one thing for to keep a name constantly to the same definition, and another to make it stand every where for the same idea: the one is necessary, the other useless and impracticable.]

XIX. [*Secondly*, But to give a further account how *words* came to *produce the doctrine of abstract ideas*, it must be observed that it is a received opinion, that language has *no other end* but the communicating our ideas, and that every significant name stands for an idea.] This being so, and it being withal certain, that names, which yet are not thought altogether insignificant, do not always mark out *particular* conceivable ideas, it is straightway concluded that *they stand for abstract notions.* That there are many names in use amongst speculative men, which do not always suggest to others determinate particular ideas, is what nobody will deny. And a little attention will discover, that it is not necessary (even in the strictest reasonings) significant names which stand for ideas should, every time they are used, excite in the understanding the ideas they are made to stand for: [in reading and discoursing, names being, for the most part, used as letters are in *algebra*, in which, though a particular quantity be marked by each letter, yet to proceed right it is not requisite that in every step each letter suggest to your thoughts that particular quantity it was appointed to stand for.*]

XX. *Some of the ends of language.*—[Besides, the (1) communicating of ideas marked by words is not the chief and only end of language, as is commonly supposed. There are other ends, as the (2) raising of some passion, the exciting to, or (3) deterring from an action, the (4) putting the mind in some particular disposition]; to which the former is, in many cases, barely subservient, and sometimes entirely omitted, when these can be obtained without it, as I think doth not infrequently happen in

* Language has become the source or origin of abstract general ideas on account of a twofold error.—(1.) That every word has one only signification. (2.) That the only end of language is the communication of our ideas.—Ed.

the familiar use of language. I entreat the reader to reflect with himself, and see if it doth not often happen, either in hearing or reading a discourse, that the passions of fear, love, hatred, admiration, disdain, and the like, arise immediately in his mind upon the perception of certain words, without any ideas coming between. At first, indeed, the words might have occasioned ideas that were fit to produce those emotions; but, if I mistake not, it will be found that when language is once grown familiar, the hearing of the sounds or sight of the characters is oft immediately attended with those passions, which at first were wont to be produced by the intervention of ideas, that are now quite omitted. May we not, for example, ☞ be affected with the promise of a *good thing*, though we have not an idea of what it is? Or is not the being threatened with danger sufficient to excite a dread, though we think not of any particular evil likely to befall us, nor yet frame to ourselves an idea of danger in abstract? If any one shall join ever so little reflection of his own to what has been said, I believe it will evidently appear to him, that general names are often used in the propriety of language without the speaker's designing them for marks of ideas in his own, which he would have them raise in the mind of the hearer. Even proper names themselves do not seem always spoken with a design to bring into our view the ideas of those individuals that are supposed to be marked by them. ☞ For example, when a schoolman tells me "Aristotle hath said it," all I conceive he means by it, is to dispose me to embrace his opinion with the deference and submission which custom has annexed to that name. And this effect may be so instantly produced in the minds of those who are accustomed to † resign their judgment to the authority of that philosopher, as it is impossible any idea either of his person, writings, or reputation, should go before.* Innumerable examples of this kind may be given, but why should I insist on those things which every one's experience will, I doubt not, plentifully suggest unto him?

XXI. *Caution in the use of language necessary.*—We have, I think, shown (1) the impossibility of *abstract ideas*. We have considered (2) what has been said for them by their ablest patrons; and endeavoured to show they are of no use for those ends to which they are thought necessary. And lastly, we have (3) traced them to the source from whence they flow, which appears to be language. It cannot be denied that words are of excellent use; in that, by their means, all that stock of knowledge, which has been purchased by the joint labours of inquisitive men in all ages and nations, may be drawn into the view

† "So close and immediate a connexion may custom establish betwixt the very word *Aristotle*, and the motions of assent and reverence in the minds of some men."—Edit. 1710.

and made the possession of one single person. But at the same time it must be owned that most parts of knowledge have been strangely perplexed and darkened by the abuse of words, and general ways of speech wherein they are delivered.* Since, therefore, words are so apt to impose on the understanding,† whatever ideas I consider, I shall endeavour to take them bare and naked into my view, keeping out of my thoughts, so far as I am able, those names which long and constant use hath so strictly united with them; from which I may expect to derive the following advantages:—

XXII. *First*, I shall be sure to get clear of all controversies *purely verbal;* the springing up of which weeds in almost all the sciences has been a main hindrance to the growth of true and sound knowledge. *Secondly*, this seems to be a sure way to extricate myself out of that fine and subtile net of *abstract ideas*, which has so miserably perplexed and entangled the minds of men, and that with this peculiar circumstance, that by how much the finer and more curious was the wit of any man, by so much the deeper was he like to be ensnared, and faster held therein. *Thirdly*, so long as I confine my thoughts to my own ideas divested of words, I do not see how I can be easily mistaken. The objects, I consider, I clearly and adequately know. I cannot be deceived in thinking I have an idea which I have not. It is not possible for me to imagine, that any of my own ideas are like or unlike, that are not truly so. To discern the agreements or disagreements that are between my ideas, to see what ideas are included in any compound idea, and what not, there is nothing more requisite, than an attentive perception of what passes in my own understanding.

XXIII. But the attainment of all *these advantages* doth *presuppose an entire deliverance from the deception of words*, which I dare hardly promise myself; so difficult a thing it is to dissolve a union so early begun, and confirmed by so long a habit as that betwixt words and ideas. [Which difficulty seems to have been very much increased by the doctrine of *abstraction*. For so long as men thought abstract ideas were annexed to their words, it doth not seem strange that they should use words for ideas: it being found an impracticable thing to lay aside the word, and *retain the abstract idea in the mind, which in itself was perfectly inconceivable.*] This seems to me the principal cause, why those men who have so emphatically recommended to others the laying aside all use of words in their meditations, and contemplating their bare ideas, have yet failed to perform it themselves. Of

* "That it may almost be made a question, whether language has contributed more to the hindrance or advancement of the sciences."—Edit. 1710.

† "I am resolved in my inquiries to make as little use of them as possibly I can."—Edit. 1710.

late many have been very sensible of the absurd opinions and insignificant disputes, which grow out of the abuse of words. And in order to remedy these evils they advise well, that we attend to the ideas signified, and draw off our attention from the words which signify them. [But how good soever this advice may be they have given others, it is plain they could not have a due regard to it themselves, so long as they thought (1) the only immediate use of words was to signify ideas, and that (2) the immediate signification of every general name was a *determinate, abstract idea.*]

XXIV. But *these being known to be mistakes, a man may* with greater ease *prevent his being imposed on by words.* He that knows he has no other than particular ideas, will not puzzle himself in vain to find out and conceive the abstract idea, annexed to any name. And he that knows names do not always stand for ideas, will spare himself the labour of looking for ideas, where there are none to be had. It were therefore to be wished that every one would use his utmost endeavours, to obtain a clear view of the ideas he would consider, separating from them all that dress and encumbrance of words which so much contribute to blind the judgment and divide the attention. In vain do we extend our view into the heavens, and pry into the entrails of the earth; in vain do we consult the writings of learned men, and trace the dark footsteps of antiquity; we need only draw the curtain of words, to behold the fairest tree of knowledge, whose fruit is excellent, and within the reach of our hand.

XXV. Unless we take care *to clear the first principles of knowledge, from the* embarrass and *delusion of words,* we may make infinite reasonings upon them to no purpose: we may draw consequences from consequences, and be never the wiser. The further we go, we shall only lose ourselves the more irrecoverably, and be the deeper entangled in difficulties and mistakes. Whoever therefore designs to read the following sheets, I entreat him to make my words the occasion of his own thinking, and endeavour to attain the same train of thoughts in reading, that I had in writing them. By this means it will be easy for him to discover the truth or falsity of what I say. He will be out of all danger of being deceived by my words, and I do not see how he can be led into an error by considering his own naked, undisguised ideas.

OF

THE PRINCIPLES

OF

HUMAN KNOWLEDGE.

PART I.

I. *Objects of human knowledge.*—[It is evident to any one who takes a survey of the objects of human knowledge, that they are either *ideas* actually (1) imprinted on the senses, or else such as are (2) perceived by attending to the passions and operations of the mind, or lastly, ideas (3) formed by help of memory and imagination, either compounding, dividing, or barely representing those originally perceived in the aforesaid ways.] By sight I have the ideas of light and colours with their several degrees and variations. By touch I perceive, for example, hard and soft, heat and cold, motion and resistance, and of all these more and less either as to quantity or degree. Smelling furnishes me with odours; the palate with tastes; and hearing conveys sounds to the mind in all their variety of tone and composition. And as several of these are observed to accompany each other, they come to be marked by one name, and so to be reputed as one thing. ☞ Thus, for example, a certain colour, taste, smell, figure, and consistence having been observed to go together, are accounted one distinct thing, signified by the name *apple.* Other collections of ideas constitute a stone, a tree, a book, and the like sensible things; which, as they are pleasing or disagreeable, excite the passions of love, hatred, joy, grief, and so forth.

II. *Mind—spirit—soul.*—But besides all that endless variety of ideas or objects of knowledge, there is likewise something which knows or perceives them, and exercises divers operations, as willing, imagining, remembering about them. This perceiving, active being is what I call *mind, spirit, soul,* or *myself.* By which words I do not denote any one of my ideas, but a thing entirely distinct from them, *wherein they exist,* or, which is the same thing, whereby they are perceived; for the existence of an idea consists in being perceived.

III. *How far the assent of the vulgar conceded.*—[That neither our thoughts, nor passions, nor ideas formed by the imagination, exist *without* the mind, is what *every body will allow.*] And (to me) it seems no less evident that the various sensations or ideas imprinted on the sense, however blended or combined together (that is, whatever objects they compose), cannot exist otherwise than *in* a mind perceiving them. [I think an intuitive knowledge may be obtained of this, by any one that shall attend to *what is meant by the term exist*, when applied to sensible things. The table I write on, I say, exists, that is, I see and feel it; and if I were out of my study I should say it existed, meaning thereby that if I was in my study I might perceive it, or that some other spirit actually does perceive it.] * There was an odour, that is, it was smelled; there was a sound, that is to say, it was heard; a colour or figure, and it was perceived by sight or touch. This is all that I can understand by these and the like expressions. For as to what is said of the absolute existence of unthinking things without any relation to their being perceived, that seems perfectly unintelligible. Their *esse* is *percipi*, nor is it possible they should have any existence, out of the minds or thinking things which perceive them.

IV. *The vulgar opinion involves a contradiction.*—It is indeed an opinion *strangely* prevailing amongst men, that houses, mountains, rivers, and in a word all sensible objects have an existence natural or real, distinct from their being perceived by the understanding. But with how great an assurance and acquiescence soever this principle may be entertained in the world; yet whoever shall find in his heart to call it in question, may, if I mistake not, perceive it to involve a manifest contradiction. [For what are the forementioned objects but the things we *perceive* by sense, and what do we perceive *besides our own ideas or sensations;* and is it not plainly repugnant that any one of these or any combination of them should exist unperceived?]

V. *Cause of this prevalent error.*—[If we throughly examine this tenet, it will, perhaps, be found at bottom to depend on the doctrine of *abstract ideas.* For can there be a nicer strain of abstraction than to distinguish the existence of sensible objects from their being perceived, so as to conceive them existing unperceived?] Light and colours, heat and cold, extension and figures, in a word the things we see and feel, what are they but so many sensations, notions, ideas, or impressions on the sense; and is it possible to separate, even in thought, any of these from perception? For my part I might as easily divide a thing from itself. I may indeed divide in my thoughts or conceive apart from each other those things which, perhaps, I never perceived by sense so divided. ☞ Thus I imagine the trunk of a human

* First argument in support of the author's theory.

body without the limbs, or conceive the smell of a rose without thinking on the rose itself. So far I will not deny I can abstract, if that may properly be called *abstraction*, which extends only to the conceiving separately such objects as it is possible may really exist or be actually perceived asunder. But my conceiving or imagining power does not extend beyond the possibility of real existence or perception. Hence as it is impossible for me to see or feel any thing without an actual sensation of that thing, so is it impossible for me to conceive in my thoughts any sensible thing or object distinct from the sensation or perception of it.*

VI. Some truths there are so near and obvious to the mind, that a man need only open his eyes to see them. Such I take this important one to be, to wit, that all the choir of heaven and furniture of the earth, in a word all those bodies which compose the mighty frame of the world, have not any subsistence without a mind, that their *being* (*esse*) is to be perceived or known; that consequently so long as they are not actually perceived by me, or do not exist in my mind or that of any other *created spirit*, they must either have no existence at all, *or else subsist in the mind of some eternal spirit:* it being perfectly unintelligible and involving all the absurdity of abstraction, to attribute to any single part of them an existence independent of a spirit.† To be convinced of which, the reader need only reflect and try to separate in his own thoughts the being of a sensible thing from its being perceived.

VII. *Second argument.*‡—[From what has been said, it follows, there is *not any other substance than spirit*, or that which perceives.] But for the fuller proof of this point, let it be considered, the sensible qualities are colour, figure, motion, smell, taste, and such like, that is, the ideas perceived by sense. [Now for an idea to exist in an unperceiving thing, is a manifest contradiction; for *to have an idea is all one as to perceive:* that therefore wherein colour, figure, and the like qualities exist, must perceive them; hence it is clear there can be no *unthinking* substance or *substratum of* those ideas.]

VIII. *Objection.—Answer.*—[But say you, though the ideas themselves do not exist without the mind, yet there may be things *like* them whereof they are copies or resemblances, which things exist without the mind, in an unthinking substance.] [I *answer*, an idea can be like nothing but an idea; a colour or

* "In truth the object and the sensation are the same thing, and cannot therefore be abstracted from each other."—Edit. 1710.

† "To make this appear with all the light and evidence of an axiom, it seems sufficient if I can but awaken the reflection of the reader, that he may take an impartial view of his own meaning, and turn his thoughts upon the subject itself, free and disengaged from all embarrass of words and prepossession in favour of received mistakes."—Edit. 1710.

‡ Vide sect. iii. and xxv.

figure can be like nothing but another colour or figure. If we look but ever so little into our thoughts, we shall find it impossible for us to conceive a likeness except only between our ideas.] [Again, I ask whether those supposed originals or external things, of which our ideas are the pictures or representations, be themselves perceivable or no? if they are, *then they are ideas*, and we have gained our point; but if you say they are not, I appeal to any one whether it be sense, to assert a colour is like something which is invisible; hard or soft, like something which is intangible; and so of the rest.]

IX. *The philosophical notion of matter involves a contradiction.*—Some there are who make a *distinction* betwixt *primary* and *secondary* qualities: by the former, they mean extension, figure, motion, rest, solidity or impenetrability, and number: by the latter they denote all other sensible qualities, as colours, sounds, tastes, and so forth. The ideas we have of these they acknowledge not to be the resemblances of any thing existing without the mind or unperceived; but they will have our ideas of the primary qualities to be patterns or images of things which exist without the mind, in an unthinking substance which they call *matter*. [By *matter* therefore we are to understand an inert, senseless substance, in which extension, figure and motion, *do actually subsist*. But it is evident from what we have already shown, that extension, figure, and motion, are *only ideas existing in the mind*, and that an idea can be like nothing but another idea, and that consequently neither they nor their archetypes can exist in an *unperceiving* substance.] Hence it is plain, that the very notion of what is called *matter*, or *corporeal substance*, involves a contradiction in it.*

X. *Argumentum ad hominem.*—They who assert that figure, motion, and the rest of the primary or original qualities, do exist without the mind, in unthinking substances, do at the same time acknowledge that colours, sounds, heat, cold, and such like secondary qualities, do not, which they tell us are sensations existing *in the mind alone*, that depend on and are occasioned by the different size, texture, and motion of the minute particles of matter. This they take for an undoubted truth, which they can demonstrate beyond all exception. [Now if it be certain, that those original qualities *are inseparably united with the other sensible qualities*, and not, even in thought, capable of being abstracted from them, it plainly follows that they exist only in the mind. But I desire any one to reflect and try, whether he

* "Insomuch that I should not think it necessary to spend more time in exposing its absurdity. But because the tenet of the existence of matter seems to have taken so deep a root in the minds of philosophers, and draws after it so many ill consequences, I choose rather to be thought prolix and tedious, than omit any thing that might conduce to the full discovery and extirpation of that prejudice."—Edit. 1710.

can, by any abstraction of thought, conceive the extension and motion of a body, without all other sensible qualities.] For my own part, I see evidently that it is not in my power to frame an idea of a body extended and moved, but I must withal give it some colour or other sensible quality which is *acknowledged* to exist only in the mind. In short, extension, figure, and motion, abstracted from all other qualities, are inconceivable. Where therefore the other sensible qualities are, there must these be also, to wit, in the mind and nowhere else.

XI. *A second argumentum ad hominem.*—[Again, *great* and *small*, *swift* and *slow*, *are allowed to exist no where without the mind*, being entirely *relative*, and changing as the frame or position of the organs of sense varies. The extension therefore which exists without the mind, is neither great nor small, the motion neither swift nor slow, that is, they are nothing at all. But, say you, they are extension in general, and motion in general: thus we see how much the tenet of extended, moveable substances existing without the mind, depends on that strange doctrine of *abstract ideas.*] And here I cannot but remark, how nearly the vague and indeterminate description of matter or corporeal substance, which the modern philosophers are run into by their own principles, resembles that antiquated and so much ridiculed notion of *materia prima*, to be met with in Aristotle and his followers. [Without extension solidity cannot be conceived; since therefore it has been shown that extension exists not in an unthinking substance, the same must also be true of solidity.]

XII. [That *number* is entirely *the creature of the mind*, even though the other qualities be allowed to exist without, will be evident to whoever considers, that the same thing bears a different denomination of number, as the mind views it with different respects.] Thus, the same extension is one, or three, or thirty-six, according as the mind considers it with reference to a yard, a foot, or an inch. Number is so visibly relative, and dependent on men's understanding, that it is strange to think how any one should give it an absolute existence without the mind. We say, one book, one page, one line; all these are equally units, though some contain several of the others. And in each instance it is plain, the unit relates to some particular combination of ideas arbitrarily put together by the mind.

XIII. *Unity*, I know, some will have to be *a simple or uncompounded idea*, accompanying all other ideas into the mind. That I have any such idea, answering the word *unity*, I do not find; and if I had, methinks I could not miss finding it; on the contrary, it should be the most familiar to my understanding, since it is said to accompany all other ideas, and to be perceived by all the ways of sensation and reflection. To say no more, it is an *abstract idea.*

XIV. *A third argumentum ad hominem.*—I shall further add, that after the same manner as modern philosophers prove certain sensible qualities to have no existence in matter, or without the mind, the same thing may be likewise proved of all other sensible qualities whatsoever. Thus, for instance, it is said that heat and cold are affections only of the mind, and not at all patterns of real beings, existing in the corporeal substances which excite them, for that the same body which appears cold to one hand, seems warm to another. [Now why may we not as well argue that figure and extension are not patterns or resemblances of qualities existing in matter, because to the same eye at different stations, or eyes of a different texture at the same station, they appear various, and cannot therefore be the images of any thing *settled and determinate without the mind?*] Again, it is proved that *sweetness* is not really in the sapid thing, because, the thing remaining unaltered, the sweetness is changed into bitter, as in case of a fever or otherwise vitiated palate. Is it not as reasonable to say, that *motion* is not without the mind, since if the succession of ideas in the mind become swifter, the motion, it is acknowledged, shall appear slower without any alteration in any external object.

XV. *Not conclusive as to extension.*—In short, let any one consider those arguments which are thought manifestly to prove that colours and tastes exist only in the mind, and he shall find they may with equal force be brought to prove the same thing of extension, figure, and motion. [Though it must be confessed, this method of arguing doth not so much prove that there is no extension or colour in an outward object, as that we do not know by *sense* which is the *true* extension or colour of the object.] But the arguments foregoing plainly show it to be impossible that any colour or extension at all, or other sensible quality whatsoever, should exist in an *unthinking* subject without the mind, or in truth, that there should be any such thing as an outward object.

XVI. But let us examine a little the received opinion. It is said *extension* is *a mode* or accident *of matter*, and that matter is the *substratum* that supports it. Now I desire that you would explain what is meant by matter's *supporting* extension: say you, I have no idea of matter, and therefore cannot explain it. I answer, though you have no positive, yet if you have any meaning at all, you must at least have a relative idea of matter; though you know not what it is, yet you must be supposed to know what relation it bears to accidents, and what is meant by its supporting them. It is evident *support* cannot here be taken in its usual or literal sense, as when we say that pillars support a building: in what sense therefore must it be taken?*

* "For my part, I am not able to discover any sense at all that can be applicable to it."—Edit. 1710.

XVII. *Philosophical meaning of "material substance" divisible into two parts.*—[If we inquire into what the most accurate philosophers declare themselves to mean by *material substance*, we shall find them acknowledge, they have no other meaning annexed to those sounds, but the idea of *being in general*, together *with the relative notion of its supporting accidents.*] The general idea of being appeareth to me the most abstract and incomprehensible of all other; and as for its supporting accidents, this, as we have just now observed, cannot be understood in the common sense of those words; it must therefore be taken in some other sense, but what that is they do not explain. [So that when I consider the *two parts* or branches which make the signification of the words *material substance*, I am convinced there is no distinct meaning annexed to them.] But why should we trouble ourselves any further, in discussing this material *substratum* or support of figure and motion, and other sensible qualities? does it not suppose they have an existence without the mind? and is not this a direct repugnancy, and altogether inconceivable?

XVIII. *The existence of external bodies wants proof.*—[But though it were possible that solid, figured, moveable substances may exist without the mind, corresponding to the ideas we have of bodies, yet *how is it possible for us to know this?* either we must know it by sense, or by reason.] [As for our senses, by them we have the knowledge *only of our sensations*, ideas, or those things that are immediately perceived by sense, call them what you will: but they do not inform us that things exist without the mind, or unperceived, like to those which are perceived.] This the materialists themselves acknowledge. It remains therefore that if we have any knowledge at all of external things, it must be by *reason*, inferring their existence from what is immediately perceived by sense. [But (I do not see) what reason can induce us to believe the existence of bodies without the mind, from what we perceive, since the very patrons of matter themselves do not pretend, there is *any necessary connexion betwixt them and our ideas.* I say, it is granted on all hands (and what happens in dreams, frenzies, and the like, puts it beyond dispute) that *it is possible we might be affected with all the ideas we have now, though no bodies existed without, resembling them.*] Hence it is evident the supposition of external bodies is not necessary for the producing our ideas: since it is granted they are produced sometimes, and might possibly be produced always, in the same order we see them in at present, without their concurrence.

XIX. *The existence of external bodies affords no explication of the manner in which our ideas are produced.*—But though we might possibly have all our sensations without them, yet perhaps it may be thought *easier* to conceive and explain the *manner* of

their production, by supposing external bodies in their likeness rather than otherwise; and so it might be at least probable there are such things as bodies that excite their ideas in our minds. [But neither can this be said; for though we give the materialists their external bodies, they, by their own confession, are never the nearer knowing how our ideas are produced: since they own themselves unable to comprehend in what manner *body can act upon spirit*, or how it is possible it should imprint any idea in the mind.] Hence it is evident, the production of ideas or sensations in our minds, can be no reason why we should suppose matter or corporeal substances, *since that is acknowledged to remain equally inexplicable with or without this supposition.* [If therefore it were possible for bodies to exist without the mind, yet to hold they do so must needs be a very precarious opinion; since it is to suppose, without any reason at all, that God has created innumerable beings *that are entirely useless, and serve to no manner of purpose.*

XX. *Dilemma.*—In short, if there were external bodies, it is impossible we should ever come to know it; and if there were not, we might have the very same reasons to think there were that we have now. [Suppose, what no one can deny possible, an intelligence, without the help of external bodies, to be affected with the same train of sensations or ideas that you are, imprinted in the same order and with like vividness in his mind. I ask, whether that intelligence hath not all the reason to believe the existence of corporeal substances, represented by his ideas, and exciting them in his mind, that you can possibly have for believing the same thing?] Of this there can be no question; which one consideration is enough to make any reasonable person suspect the strength of whatever arguments he may think himself to have for the existence of bodies without the mind.

XXI. [Were it necessary to add any *further proof against the existence of matter*, after what has been said, I could instance several of those errors and difficulties (not to mention impieties) which have sprung from that tenet.] It has occasioned numberless controversies and disputes in philosophy, and not a few of greater moment in religion. But I shall not enter into the detail of them in this place, as well because I think arguments *à posteriori* are unnecessary for confirming what has been, if I mistake not, sufficiently demonstrated *à priori*, as because I shall hereafter find occasion to say somewhat of them.

XXII. I am afraid I have given cause to think me needlessly prolix in handling this subject. For to what purpose is it to dilate on that which may be demonstrated with the utmost evidence in a line or two, to any one that is capable of the least reflection? it is but looking into your own thoughts, and so trying whether you can conceive it possible for a sound, or figure,

or motion, or colour, to exist without the mind, or unperceived. This easy trial may make you see, that what you contend for is a downright contradiction. Insomuch that I am content to put the whole upon this issue; if you can but *conceive* it possible for one extended moveable substance, or in general, for any one idea, or any thing like an idea, to exist otherwise than in a mind perceiving it, I shall readily give up the cause: and as for all that *compages* of external bodies which you contend for, I shall grant you its existence, though (1) *you cannot either give me any reason why you believe it exists,** or (2) *assign any use to it when it is supposed to exist.*† I say, the bare possibility of your opinion's being true, shall pass for an argument that it is so.‡

XXIII. [But say you, surely there is nothing easier than to imagine trees, for instance, in a park, or books existing in a closet, and nobody by to perceive them. I answer, you may so, there is no difficulty in it]: [but what is all this, I beseech you, more than framing in your mind certain ideas which you call *books* and *trees*, and at the same time omitting to frame the idea of any one that may perceive them? *but do not you yourself perceive or think of them all the while?*] this therefore is nothing to the purpose; it only shows you have the power of imagining or forming ideas in your mind; [but it doth not show that you can conceive it possible the objects of your thought may exist without the mind: to make out this, *it is necessary that you conceive them existing unconceived or unthought-of, which is a manifest repugnancy.*] [When we do our utmost to conceive the existence of external bodies, we are all the while only contemplating our own ideas. But the mind, taking no notice of itself, is deluded to think it can and doth conceive bodies existing unthought-of or without the mind; though at the same time they are apprehended by or exist in itself.] A little attention will discover to any one the truth and evidence of what is here said, and make it unnecessary to insist on any other proofs against the existence of material substance.

XXIV. *The absolute existence of unthinking things are words without a meaning.*—It is very obvious, upon the least inquiry into our own thoughts, to know whether it be possible for us to understand what is meant by the *absolute existence of sensible objects in themselves or without the mind.* To me it is evident those words mark out either a direct contradiction, or else nothing at all. And to convince others of this, I know no readier or fairer way, than to entreat they would calmly attend to their own thoughts: and if by this attention the emptiness or repugnancy of those expressions does appear, surely nothing more is requisite for their conviction. It is on this therefore that I insist, to wit, that the

* Vide sect. lviii. † Vide sect. lx.

‡ i. e. Although your argument be deficient in the two requisites of an hypothesis. —Ed.

absolute existence of unthinking things are words without a meaning, or which include a contradiction. This is what I repeat and inculcate, and earnestly recommend to the attentive thoughts of the reader.

XXV. *Third argument.**—*Refutation of Locke.*—[All our ideas, sensations, or the things which we perceive, by whatsoever names they may be distinguished, are visibly inactive; there is nothing of power or agency included in them. So that *one idea* or object of thought *cannot produce*, or make *any alteration in another.*] To be satisfied of the truth of this, there is nothing else requisite but a bare observation of our ideas. For since they and every part of them exist only in the mind, it follows that there is nothing in them but what is perceived. But whoever shall attend to his ideas, whether of sense or reflection, will not perceive in them any power or activity; there is therefore no such thing contained in them. A little attention will discover to us that the very being of an idea implies passiveness and inertness in it, insomuch that it is impossible for an idea to do any thing, or, strictly speaking, to be the cause of any thing: neither can it be the resemblance or pattern of any active being, as is evident from Sect. VIII. [Whence it plainly follows that extension, figure, and motion, cannot be the cause of our sensations. To say, therefore, that these are the effects of powers resulting from the configuration, number, motion, and size of corpuscles, must certainly be false.]†

XXVI. *Cause of ideas.*—We perceive a continual succession of ideas, some are anew excited, others are changed or totally disappear. There is therefore some cause of these ideas whereon they depend, and which produces and changes them. That this cause cannot be any quality or idea or combination of ideas, is clear from the preceding section. It must therefore be a substance; but it has been shown that there is no corporeal or material substance: [it remains therefore that the *cause of ideas* is an incorporeal active substance or spirit.]

XXVII. *No idea of spirit.*—A spirit is one simple, undivided, active being: as it perceives ideas, it is called the *understanding*, and as it produces or otherwise operates about them, it is called the *will.* Hence there can be no idea formed of a soul or spirit: [for all ideas whatever, being passive and inert (vide Sect. XXV.), they cannot represent unto us, by way of image or *likeness*, that which acts.] A little attention will make it plain to any one, that to have an idea which shall be like that active principle of motion and change of ideas, is absolutely impossible. [Such is the nature of *spirit*, or that which acts, that it cannot be of itself perceived *but only by the effects which it produceth.*] If any man

* Vide sect. iii. and vii. † Vide sect. cii.

shall doubt of the truth of what is here delivered, let him but reflect and try if he can frame the idea of any power or active being; and whether he hath ideas of two principal powers, marked by the names *will* and *understanding*, distinct from each other as well as from a third idea of substance or being in general, with a relative notion of its supporting or being the subject of the aforesaid powers, which is signified by the name *soul* or *spirit*. This is what some hold; but so far as I can see, the words *will*,* *soul*, *spirit*, do not stand for different ideas, or in truth, for any idea at all, but for something which is very different from ideas, and which being an agent cannot be like unto, or represented by, any idea whatsoever. [Though it must be owned at the same time, that we have some notion of soul, spirit, and the operations of the mind, such as willing, loving, hating, inasmuch as we know or understand the meaning of those words.]

XXVIII. I find I can excite ideas in my mind at pleasure, and vary and shift the scene as oft as I think fit. It is no more than willing, and straightway this or that idea arises in my fancy: and by the same power it is obliterated, and makes way for another. This making and unmaking of ideas doth very properly denominate the mind active. Thus much is certain, and grounded on experience: but when we talk of unthinking agents, or of exciting ideas exclusive of volition, we only amuse ourselves with words.

XXIX. *Ideas of sensation* † *differ from those of reflection or memory.*—[But whatever power I may have over *my own* thoughts, I find the ideas actually perceived by sense have not a like dependence on my will.] When in broad day-light I open my eyes, it is not in my power to choose whether I shall see or no, or to determine what particular objects shall present themselves to my view; and so likewise as to the hearing and other senses, the ideas imprinted on them are not creatures of my will. [There is *therefore some other will or spirit* that *produces them.*]

XXX. *Laws of nature.*—[The ideas of sense are more strong, lively, and *distinct* than those of the imagination; they have likewise a steadiness, order, and coherence, and are not excited at random, as those which are the effects of human wills often are, but in a regular train or series, the admirable connexion whereof sufficiently testifies the wisdom and benevolence of its author.] Now *the set rules or established methods, wherein the mind we depend on excites in us the ideas of sense, are called the laws of nature:* and these we learn by experience, which teaches us that such and such ideas are attended with such and such other ideas, in the ordinary course of things.

XXXI. *Knowledge of them necessary for the conduct of worldly*

* "Understanding, mind."—Edit. 1710.

† 1st. They do not depend on the will.—2nd. They are distinct.

affairs.—[This gives us a sort of foresight, which enables us to regulate our actions for the benefit of life. And without this we should be eternally at a loss: we could not know how to act any thing that might procure us the least pleasure, or remove the least pain of sense.] That food nourishes, sleep refreshes, and fire warms us; that to sow in the seed-time is the way to reap in the harvest, and, in general, that to obtain such or such ends, such or such means are conducive, all this we know, *not by discovering any necessary connexion between our ideas*, but only by the observation of the settled laws of nature, without which we should be all in uncertainty and confusion, and a grown man no more know how to manage himself in the affairs of life than an infant just born.

XXXII. And yet *this* consistent, *uniform working*, which so evidently displays the goodness and wisdom of that governing Spirit whose will constitutes the laws of nature, is so far from leading our thoughts to him, that it rather *sends them a wandering after second causes.* [For when we perceive certain ideas of sense constantly followed by other ideas, and *we know this is not of our own doing*, we forthwith attribute power and agency to the ideas themselves, and make one the cause of another, than which nothing can be more absurd and unintelligible.] Thus, for example, having observed that when we perceive by sight a certain round luminous figure, we at the same time perceive by touch the idea or sensation called *heat*, we do from thence conclude the sun to be the cause of heat. And in like manner perceiving the motion and collision of bodies to be attended with sound, we are inclined to think the latter an effect of the former.

XXXIII. *Of real things and ideas or chimeras.*—[The ideas imprinted on the senses by the author of nature are called *real things:* and those excited in the imagination, being less regular, vivid, and constant, are more properly termed *ideas*, or *images of things*, which they copy and represent.] But then our sensations, be they never so vivid and distinct, are nevertheless *ideas*, that is, they exist in the mind, or are perceived by it, as truly as the ideas of its own framing. The ideas of sense are allowed to have more reality in them, that is, to be more (1) *strong*, (2) *orderly*, and (3) *coherent* than the creatures of the mind: but this is no argument that they exist without the mind. They are also (4) *less dependent on the spirit*,* or thinking substance which perceives them, in that they are excited by the will of another and more powerful spirit: yet still they are *ideas*, and certainly no *idea*, whether faint or strong, can exist otherwise than in a mind perceiving it.

XXXIV. *First general objection.—Answer.*—Before we proceed

* Vide sect. xxix.—Note.

any further, it is necessary to spend some time in answering objections which may probably be made against the principles hitherto laid down. In doing of which, if I seem too prolix to those of quick apprehensions, I hope it may be pardoned, since all men do not equally apprehend things of this nature; and I am willing to be understood by every one. [*First* then it will be objected that by the foregoing principles, *all that is real and substantial in nature is banished out of the world:* and instead thereof a chimerical scheme of ideas takes place.] All things that exist, exist only in the mind, that is, they are purely notional. What therefore becomes of the sun, moon, and stars? What must we think of houses, rivers, mountains, trees, stones; nay, even of our own bodies? Are all these but so many chimeras and illusions on the fancy? To all which, and whatever else of the same sort may be objected, [I *answer*, that by the principles premised, we are not deprived of any one thing in nature. Whatever we see, feel, hear, or any wise conceive or understand, remains as secure as ever, and is as real as ever. There is a *rerum natura*, and the distinction between realities and chimeras retains its full force.] This is evident from Sect. XXIX., XXX., and XXXIII., where we have shown what is meant by *real things* in opposition to *chimeras*, or ideas of our own framing; but then they both equally exist in the mind, and in that sense are like *ideas*.

XXXV. *The existence of matter, as understood by philosophers, denied.**—I do not argue against the existence of any one thing that we can apprehend, either by sense or reflection. That the things I see with mine eyes and touch with my hands do exist, really exist, I make not the least question. The only thing whose existence we deny, *is that which philosophers call matter* or corporeal substance. And in doing of this, there is no damage done to the rest of mankind, who, I dare say, will never miss it. The atheist indeed will want the colour of an empty name to support his impiety; and the philosophers may possibly find, they have lost a great handle for trifling and disputation.

XXXVI. *Reality explained.*—If any man thinks this detracts from the existence or reality of things, he is very far from understanding what hath been premised in the plainest terms I could think of. Take here an abstract of what has been said. [There are spiritual substances, minds, or human souls, which will or excite ideas in themselves at pleasure: but these are faint, weak, and unsteady in respect of others they perceive by sense, which being impressed upon them according to certain rules or laws of nature, speak themselves the effects of a mind more powerful and wise than human spirits. These latter are said to have more *reality* in them than the former: by which is meant that they are

* Vide sect. lxxxiv.

affecting, orderly, and distinct, and that they are not fictions of the mind perceiving them.] And in this sense, the sun that I see by day is the real sun, and that which I imagine by night is the idea of the former. In the sense here given of *reality*, it is evident that every vegetable, star, mineral, and in general each part of the mundane system, is as much a *real being* by our principles as by any other. Whether others mean any thing by the term *reality* different from what I do, I entreat them to look into their own thoughts and see.

XXXVII. *The philosophic, not the vulgar substance, taken away.*—[It will be urged that thus much at least is true, to wit, that we take away all corporeal substances. To this my answer is, that if the word *substance* be taken in the vulgar sense, for a combination of sensible qualities, such as extension, solidity, weight, and the like: this we cannot be accused of taking away. But if it be taken in a philosophic sense, for the *support of* accidents or *qualities without the mind;* then indeed I acknowledge that we take it away, if one may be said to take away that which never had any existence, not even in the imagination.]

XXXVIII. But, say you, it sounds very harsh to say we eat and drink ideas, and are clothed with ideas. I acknowledge it does so, the word *idea* not being used in common discourse to signify the several combinations of sensible qualities, which are called *things:* and it is certain that any expression which varies from the familiar use of language, will seem harsh and ridiculous. But this doth not concern the truth of the proposition, which in other words is no more than to say, we are fed and clothed with those things which we perceive immediately by our senses. The hardness or softness, the colour, taste, warmth, figure, and such like qualities, which combined together constitute the several sorts of victuals and apparel, have been shown to exist only in the mind that perceives them; and this is all that is meant by calling them *ideas;* which word, if it was as ordinarily used as *thing*, would sound no harsher nor more ridiculous than it. I am not for disputing about the propriety, but the truth of the expression. If therefore you agree with me that we eat, and drink, and are clad with the immediate objects of sense, which cannot exist unperceived or without the mind; I shall readily grant it is more proper or conformable to custom, that they should be called things rather than ideas.

XXXIX. *The term idea preferable to thing.*—If it be demanded why I make use of the word *idea*, and do not rather in compliance with custom call them *things*. [I answer, I do it for two reasons: first, because the term *thing*, in contradistinction to *idea*, is generally supposed to denote somewhat existing without the mind: secondly, because *thing* hath a more comprehensive signification than *idea*, including *spirits*, or thinking things, as

well as *ideas.*] Since therefore the objects of sense exist only in the mind, and are withal thoughtless and inactive, I chose to mark them by the word *idea*, which implies those properties.

XL. *The evidence of the senses not discredited.*—But, say what we can, some one perhaps may be apt to reply, he will still believe his senses, and never suffer any arguments, how plausible soever, to prevail over the certainty of them. Be it so, assert the evidence of sense as high as you please, we are willing to do the same. That what I see, hear, and feel *doth exist, that is* to say, *is perceived by me*, I no more doubt than I do of my own being. But I do not see how the testimony of sense can be alleged as a proof for the existence of any thing which is not perceived by sense. We are not for having any man turn *sceptic*, and disbelieve his senses; on the contrary, we give them all the stress and assurance imaginable; nor are there any principles more opposite to scepticism than those we have laid down,* as shall be hereafter clearly shown.

XLI. *Second objection.—Answer.*—Secondly, it will be *objected* that there is a great difference betwixt real fire, for instance, and the idea of fire, betwixt dreaming or imagining one's self burnt, and actually being so: this and the like may be urged in opposition to our tenets. [To all which the *answer* is evident from what hath been already said, and I shall only add in this place, that if real fire be very different from the idea of fire, so also is the real pain that it occasions, very different from the idea of the same pain: and yet nobody will pretend that real pain either is, or can possibly be, in an unperceiving thing or without the mind, any more than its idea.]

XLII. *Third objection.—Answer.*—Thirdly, it will be objected that we see things actually without or at a distance from us, and which consequently do not exist in the mind, it being absurd that those things which are seen at the distance of several miles, should be as near to us as our own thoughts. [In answer to this, I desire it may be considered, that in a *dream* we do oft perceive things as existing at a great distance off, and yet for all that, those things are acknowledged to have their existence only in the mind.]

XLIII. But for the fuller clearing of this point, it may be worth while to consider, how it is that we perceive distance and things placed at a distance by sight. For that we should in truth see *external* space, and bodies actually existing in it, some nearer, others further off, seems to carry with it some opposition to what hath been said, of their existing nowhere without the mind. The consideration of this difficulty it was that gave birth to my Essay towards a new Theory of Vision, which was pub-

* They extirpate the very root of scepticism, "the fallacy of the senses."—Ed.

lished not long since. [Wherein it is shown (1) that *distance* or outness is *neither immediately* of itself *perceived* by sight, nor yet apprehended or judged of by lines and angles, or any thing that hath a necessary connexion with it: but (2) that it is *only suggested* to our thoughts, by certain visible ideas and sensations attending vision, which in their own nature have no manner of similitude or relation, either with distance, or things placed at a distance. But by a connexion taught us *by experience*, they come to signify and suggest them to us, after the same manner that *words* of any language suggest the ideas they are made to stand for. ☞ Insomuch that a man *born* blind, and afterwards made to see, would not, at first sight, think the things he saw to be without his mind, or at any distance from him. See Sect. XLI. of the forementioned treatise.

XLIV. The ideas of sight and touch make two species, entirely distinct and heterogeneous. *The former are marks and prognostics of the latter.* That the proper objects of sight neither exist without the mind, nor are the images of external things, was shown even in that treatise. Though throughout the same, the contrary be supposed true of tangible objects: not that to suppose that vulgar error was necessary for establishing the notions therein laid down, but because it was beside my purpose to examine and refute it in a discourse concerning *vision.* [So that in strict truth the ideas of sight, when we apprehend by them distance and things placed at a distance, do not suggest or mark out to us things *actually* existing at a distance, but only admonish us what ideas of touch will be imprinted in our minds at such and such distances of time, and in consequence of such or such actions.] It is, I say, evident from what has been said in the foregoing parts of this treatise, and in Sect. CXLVII., and elsewhere of the essay concerning vision, that visible ideas are the language whereby the governing Spirit, on whom we depend, informs us what tangible ideas he is about to imprint upon us, in case we excite this or that motion in our own bodies. But for a fuller information in this point, I refer to the essay itself.

XLV. *Fourth objection, from perpetual annihilation and creation.* —*Answer.*—[Fourthly, it will be objected, that from the foregoing principles it follows, things are every moment annihilated and created anew.] The objects of sense exist only when they are perceived: the trees therefore are in the garden, or the chairs in the parlour, no longer than while there is somebody by to perceive them. Upon *shutting my eyes*, all the furniture in the room is reduced to nothing, and barely upon opening them it is again created. [In *answer* to all which, I refer the reader to what has been said in Sect. III., IV., &c., and desire he will consider whether he means any thing by the actual existence of an idea, distinct

from its being perceived.] For my part, after the nicest inquiry I could make, I am not able to discover that any thing else is meant by those words. And I once more entreat the reader to sound his own thoughts, and not suffer himself to be imposed on by words. If he can conceive it possible either for his ideas or their archetypes to exist without being perceived, then I give up the cause: but if he cannot, he will acknowledge it is unreasonable for him to stand up in defence of he knows not what, and pretend to charge on me as an absurdity the not assenting to those propositions which at bottom have no meaning in them.

XLVI. *Argumentum ad hominem.*—[It will not be amiss to observe, how far the received principles of philosophy are themselves chargeable with those pretended absurdities.] [(1) It is thought strangely absurd that upon closing my eye-lids all the visible objects round me should be reduced to nothing; and yet is not this what philosophers commonly acknowledge when they agree on all hands, that light and colours, which alone are the proper and immediate objects of sight, are mere sensations, that exist no longer than they are perceived?] [(2) Again, it may to some perhaps seem very incredible, that things should be every moment creating; yet this very notion is commonly taught in the schools. For the *schoolmen*, though they acknowledge the existence of matter, and that the whole mundane fabric is framed out of it, are nevertheless of opinion that it cannot subsist without the divine conservation, which by them is expounded to be a continual creation.]

XLVII. [(3) Further, a little thought will discover to us, that though we allow the existence of matter or corporeal substance, yet it will unavoidably follow *from the principles which are now generally admitted*, that the *particular* bodies, of what kind soever, do none of them exist whilst they are not perceived.] For (1) it is evident from Sect. XI. and the following sections, that the matter philosophers contend for is an incomprehensible somewhat, *which hath none of those particular qualities whereby the bodies falling under our senses are distinguished one from another.* (2) But to make this more plain, it must be remarked, that the infinite divisibility of matter is now universally allowed, at least by the most approved and considerable philosophers, who, on the received principles, demonstrate it beyond all exception. Hence it follows, that there is an infinite number of parts in each particle of matter, which are not perceived by sense. The reason, therefore, that any particular body seems to be of a finite magnitude, or exhibits only a finite number of parts to sense, is, not because it contains no more, since in itself it contains an infinite number of parts, *but because the sense is not acute enough to discern them.* In proportion, therefore, as the sense is rendered more acute, it perceives a greater number of parts in the

object; that is, the object appears greater, and its figure varies, those parts in its extremities which were before unperceivable, appearing now to bound it in very different lines and angles from those perceived by an obtuser sense. And, at length, after various changes of size and shape, when the sense becomes infinitely acute, the body shall seem infinite. During all which, there is no alteration in the body, but only in the sense. *Each body, therefore, considered in itself, is infinitely extended, and consequently void of all shape or figure.* From which it follows, that though we should grant the existence of matter to be ever so certain, yet it is withal as certain, the materialists themselves are by their own principles forced to acknowledge, that neither the particular bodies perceived by sense, nor any thing like them, exist without the mind. [Matter, I say, and each particle thereof, is according to them infinite and shapeless, *and it is the mind that frames all that variety of bodies which compose the visible world, any one whereof does not exist longer than it is perceived.*]

XLVIII. If we consider it, the objection proposed in Sect. XLV. will not be found reasonably charged on the principles we have premised, so as in truth to make any objection at all against our notions. [For though we hold, indeed, the objects of sense to be nothing else but ideas which cannot exist unperceived, yet we may not hence conclude they have no existence, except only while they are perceived by *us*, since *there may be some other spirit that perceives them, though we do not.*] Wherever bodies are said to have no existence without the mind, I would not be understood to mean this or that particular mind, but *all minds whatsoever.* It does not therefore follow from the foregoing principles, that bodies are annihilated and created every moment, or exist not at all during the intervals between our perception in them.

XLIX. *Fifth objection.—Answer.*—[Fifthly, it may perhaps be *objected*, that if extension and figure exist only in the mind, it follows that the mind is extended and figured; since extension is a mode or attribute, which (to speak with the schools) is predicated of the subject in which it exists.] I *answer*, (1) Those qualities are in the mind *only as they are perceived by it*, that is, not by way of *mode* or *attribute*, but only by way of *idea*; and it no more follows, that the soul or mind is extended because extension exists in it alone, than it does that it is red or blue, because those colours are *on all hands* acknowledged to exist in it, and nowhere else.] [(2) As to what philosophers say of subject and mode, that seems very groundless and unintelligible.] ☞ For instance, in this proposition, a die is hard, extended, and square; they will have it that the word *die* denotes a subject or substance, distinct from the hardness, extension, and figure, which are predicated of it, and in which they exist. This I cannot comprehend: [to me a die seems to be nothing distinct from those

things which are termed its modes or accidents. And to say a die is hard, extended, and square, is not to attribute those qualities to a subject distinct from and supporting them, but only an explication of the meaning of the word *die.*]

L. *Sixth objection, from natural philosophy.—Answer.*—[Sixthly, you will say there have been a great many things explained by matter and motion: take away these, and you destroy the whole corpuscular philosophy, and undermine those mechanical principles which have been applied with so much success to account for the *phenomena.*] In short, whatever advances have been made, either by ancient or modern philosophers, in the study of nature, do all proceed on the supposition, that corporeal substance or matter doth really exist. To this I *answer*, that there is not any one *phenomenon* explained on that supposition, which may not as well be explained without it, as might easily be made appear by an *induction of particulars.* [To explain the *phenomena*, is all one as to show, why upon such and such occasions we are affected with such and such ideas. But (1) how matter should operate on a spirit, or produce any idea in it, is what no philosopher will pretend to explain. It is therefore evident, there can be no use of matter in natural philosophy.] [Besides, (2) they who attempt to account for things, do it not by *corporeal substance*, but by figure, motion, and other qualities, which are in truth no more than mere ideas, and therefore cannot be the cause of any thing, as hath been already shown.] See Sect. XXV.

LI. *Seventh objection.—Answer.*—[Seventhly, it will upon this be demanded whether it does not seem *absurd to take away natural causes, and ascribe every thing to the immediate operation of spirits?*] We must no longer say upon these principles that fire heats, or water cools, but that a spirit heats, and so forth. Would not a man be deservedly laughed at, who should talk after this manner? I *answer*, he would so; in such things we ought to *think with the learned, and speak with the vulgar.* They who to demonstration are convinced of the truth of the Copernican system, do nevertheless say the sun rises, the sun sets, or comes to the meridian: and if they affected a contrary style in common talk, it would without doubt appear very ridiculous. A little reflection on what is here said will make it manifest, that the common use of language would receive no manner of alteration or disturbance from the admission of our tenets.

LII. [*In the ordinary affairs of life, any phrases may be retained,* so long as they excite in us proper sentiments, or dispositions to act in such a manner as is necessary for our *well-being*, how false soever they may be, if taken in a strict and *speculative sense.* Nay this is unavoidable, since propriety being regulated by *custom*, language is suited to the *received* opinions, which are not always the truest.] Hence it is impossible, even in the most rigid philoso-

phic reasonings, so far to alter the bent and genius of the tongue we speak, as never to give a handle for cavillers to pretend difficulties and inconsistencies. But a fair and ingenuous reader will collect the sense from the scope and tenor and connexion of a discourse, making allowances for those inaccurate modes of speech which use has made inevitable.

LIII. [As to the *opinion that there are no corporeal causes*, this has been heretofore maintained by some of the schoolmen, as it is of late by others among the modern philosophers, who though they allow matter to exist, yet will have God alone to be the immediate efficient cause of all things.] These men saw, that amongst all the objects of sense, there was none which had any power or activity included in it, and that by consequence this was likewise true of whatever bodies they supposed to exist without the mind, like unto the immediate objects of sense. [But then, that they should suppose an innumerable multitude of created beings, which they acknowledge are not capable of producing any one effect in nature, and which therefore are made to no manner of purpose, since God might have done every thing as well without them; this I say, though we should allow it possible, must yet be a very unaccountable and extravagant supposition.]

LIV. *Eighth objection.—Twofold answer.*—[In the eighth place, the universal concurrent assent of mankind may be thought by some an invincible argument in behalf of matter, or the existence of external things.] Must we suppose the whole world to be mistaken? and if so, what cause can be assigned of so wide-spread and predominant an error? I answer, *first*, That upon a narrow inquiry, it will not perhaps be found, so many as is imagined do really believe the existence of matter or things without the mind. Strictly speaking, to believe that which involves a contradiction, or has no meaning in it, is impossible: and whether the foregoing expressions are not of that sort, I refer it to the impartial examination of the reader. [In one sense indeed, men may be said to believe that matter exists, that is, they *act* as if the immediate cause of their sensations, which affects them every moment and is so nearly present to them, were some senseless, unthinking being.] But that they should clearly apprehend any meaning marked by those words, and form thereof a settled *speculative* opinion, is what I am not able to conceive. This is not the only instance wherein men impose upon themselves, by imagining they believe those propositions they have often heard, though at bottom they have no meaning in them.

LV. But *secondly*, though we should grant a notion to be ever so universally and stedfastly adhered to, yet this is but a weak argument of its truth, to whoever considers what a vast number of prejudices and false opinions are every where embraced with

the utmost tenaciousness, by the unreflecting (which are the far greater) part of mankind. ☞ There was a time when the antipodes and motion of the earth were looked upon as monstrous absurdities, even by men of learning: and if it be considered what a small proportion they bear to the rest of mankind, we shall find that at this day, those notions have gained but a very inconsiderable footing in the world.

LVI. *Ninth objection.—Answer.*—[But it is demanded, that we assign *a cause of this prejudice*, and account for its obtaining in the world. To this I *answer*, That men knowing they perceived several ideas, *whereof they themselves were not the authors*, as not being excited from within, nor depending on the operation of their wills, this made them maintain, those ideas or objects of perception had an *existence independent of, and without the mind*, without ever dreaming that a contradiction was involved in those words.] [But philosophers having plainly seen that the immediate objections of perception do not exist without the mind, *they in some degree* corrected the mistake of the vulgar, but at the same time run into another which seems no less absurd, to wit, that there are certain objects really existing without the mind, or having a subsistence distinct from being perceived, *of which our ideas are only images* or resemblances, imprinted by those objects on the mind.] And this notion of the philosophers owes its origin to the same cause with the former, namely, their being conscious that they were not the authors of their own sensations, which they evidently knew were imprinted from without, and which therefore must have some cause distinct from the minds on which they are imprinted.

LVII. But *why they should suppose the ideas of sense to be excited in us by things in their likeness*, and not rather have recourse to *spirit* which alone can act, may be accounted for, [*first*, because they were not aware of the repugnancy there is, (1) as well in supposing things like unto our ideas existing without, as (2) attributing to them *power or activity*.] [*Secondly*, because the supreme spirit, which excites those ideas in our minds, is not marked out and limited to our view *by any particular finite collection of sensible ideas*, as human agents are by their size, complexion, limbs, and motions.] [And *thirdly*, because his operations are regular and uniform.] Whenever the course of nature is interrupted by a miracle, men are ready to own the presence of a superior agent. But when we see things go on in the ordinary course, they do not excite in us any reflection; their order and concatenation, though it be an argument of the greatest wisdom, power, and goodness in their creator, is yet so constant and familiar to us, that we do not think them the immediate effects of a *free spirit:* especially since inconstancy and mutability in acting, though it be an imperfection, is looked on as a mark of *freedom*.

LVIII. *Tenth objection.—Answer.*—Tenthly, it will be objected, that the notions we advance are inconsistent with several sound truths in philosophy and mathematics. ☞ [For example, *the motion of the earth* is now universally admitted by astronomers, as a truth grounded on the clearest and most convincing reasons; but on the foregoing principles, there can be no such thing. For motion being only an idea, it follows that if it be not perceived, it exists not; but the motion of the earth is not perceived by sense.] I *answer*, that tenet, if rightly understood, will be found to agree with the principles we have premised; [for the question, whether the earth moves or no, amounts in reality to no more than this, to wit, whether we have reason to conclude from what hath been observed by astronomers, that if we were placed in such and such circumstances, and such or such a position and distance, both from the earth and sun, we should perceive the former to move among the choir of the planets, and appearing in all respects like one of them: and this, by the established rules of nature, which we have no reason to mistrust, is reasonably collected from the phenomena.]

LIX. [We may, from the experience we have had of the train and succession of ideas in our minds, often make, I will not say uncertain conjectures, but sure and well-grounded predictions, concerning the ideas we shall be affected with, pursuant to a great train of actions, and be enabled to pass a right judgment of what would have appeared to us, in case we were in circumstances very different from those we are in at present.] [Herein consists the knowledge of nature, which may preserve its use and certainty very consistently with what hath been said.] It will be easy to apply this to whatever objections of the like sort may be drawn from the magnitude of the stars, or any other discoveries in astronomy or nature.

LX. *Eleventh objection.*—[In the eleventh place, it will be demanded *to what purpose serves that curious organization of plants*, and *the admirable mechanism in the parts of animals?*] Might not vegetables grow, and shoot forth leaves and blossoms, and animals perform all their motions, as well without as with all that variety of internal parts so elegantly contrived and put together, *which being ideas have nothing powerful or operative in them, nor have any necessary connexion with the effects ascribed to them?* If it be a spirit that immediately produces every effect by a *fiat*, or act of his will, we must think all that is fine and artificial in the works, whether of man or nature, to be made in vain. ☞ By this doctrine, though an *artist* hath made the spring and wheels, and every movement of a watch, and adjusted them in such a manner as he knew would produce the motions he designed; yet he must think all this done to no purpose, and that it is an intelligence which directs the index, and points to the hour of the day. If so, why

may not the intelligence do it, without his being at the pains of making the movements, and putting them together? Why does not an empty case serve as well as another? And how comes it to pass, that whenever there is any fault in the going of a watch, there is some corresponding disorder to be found in the movements, which being mended by a skilful hand, all is right again?

The like may be said of all the clock-work of nature, great part whereof is so wonderfully fine and subtile, as scarce to be discerned by the best microscope. In short it will be asked, how upon our principles any tolerable account can be given, or any final cause assigned of an innumerable multitude of bodies and machines framed with the most exquisite art, which in the common philosophy have very apposite uses assigned them, and serve to explain abundance of phenomena.

LXI. *Answer.*—To all which I answer, *first*, that though there were some difficulties relating to the administration of providence, and the uses by it assigned to the several parts of nature, which I could not solve by the foregoing principles, yet this objection could be of small weight against the truth and certainty of those things which may be proved *à priori*, with the utmost evidence. *Secondly*, but neither are the received principles free from the like difficulties; for it may still be demanded, to what end God should take those round-about methods of effecting things by instruments and machines, which no one can deny might have been effected by the *mere command of his will*, without all that *apparatus:* nay, *(thirdly,)* if we narrowly consider it, we shall find the objection may be retorted with greater force on those who hold the existence of those machines without the mind; for it has been made evident, that solidity, bulk, figure, motion, and the like, *have no activity* or *efficacy* in them, so as to be capable of producing any one effect in nature. See Sect. XXV. [Whoever therefore supposes them to exist (allowing the supposition possible) when they are not perceived, does it manifestly to no purpose; since the only use that is assigned to them, as they exist unperceived, is that they produce those perceivable effects, which in truth cannot be ascribed to any thing but spirit.]

LXII. *(Fourthly.)*—[But to come nearer the difficulty, it must be observed, that though the fabrication of all those parts and organs be not absolutely necessary to the *producing any effect*, yet it is necessary to the producing of things *in a constant, regular way, according to the laws of nature.* There are certain general laws that run through the whole chain of natural effects: these are learned by the observation and study of nature, and are by men applied (1) as well to the framing artificial things for the use and ornament of life, as (2) to the explaining the various *phenomena:*] which explication consists only in showing the con-

formity any particular phenomenon hath to the general laws of nature, or which is the same thing, in discovering the *uniformity* there is in the production of natural effects; as will be evident to whoever shall attend to the several instances, wherein philosophers pretend to account for appearances. That there is a great and conspicuous use in these regular constant methods of working observed by the supreme agent, hath been shown in Sect. XXXI. And it is no less visible, that a particular size, figure, motion, and disposition of parts are necessary, though not absolutely to the producing any effect, yet to the producing it according to the standing mechanical laws of nature. ☞ Thus, for instance, it cannot be denied that God, or the intelligence which sustains and rules the ordinary course of things, might, if he were minded to produce a miracle, cause all the motions on the dial-plate of a watch, though nobody had ever made the movements, and put them in it: but yet if he will act agreeably to the rules of mechanism, by him for wise ends established and maintained in the creation, it is necessary that those actions of the watchmaker, whereby he makes the movements and rightly adjusts them, precede the production of the aforesaid motions; as also that any disorder in them be attended with the perception of some corresponding disorder in the movements, which being once corrected, all is right again.

LXIII. It may indeed on some occasions be *necessary, that the author of nature display his overruling power* in producing some appearance out of his ordinary series of things. Such exceptions from the general rules of nature are proper to *surprise and awe men* into an acknowledgment of the divine being: [but then they are to be used but seldom, (1) otherwise there is a plain reason why they should fail of that effect.] [(2) Besides, God seems to choose the *convincing our reason* of his attributes by the works of nature, which discover so much harmony and contrivance in their make, and are such plain indications of wisdom and beneficence in their author, rather than to *astonish* us into a belief of his being by anomalous and surprising events.]

LXIV. *To set this matter in a yet clearer light*, I shall observe that what has been objected in Sect. LX. amounts in reality to no more than this: ideas are not any how and at random produced, there being a certain order and connexion between them, like to that of cause and effect: there are also several combinations of them, made in a very regular and artificial manner, which seem like so many instruments in the hand of nature, that being hid, as it were, behind the scenes, have a secret operation in producing those appearances which are seen on the theatre of the world, being themselves discernible only to the curious eye of the philosopher. But since one idea cannot be the cause of another, to what purpose is that connexion? and since those

instruments, being barely *inefficacious perceptions* in the mind, are not subservient to the production of natural effects: it is demanded why they are made, or, in other words, what reason can be assigned why God should make us, upon a close inspection into his works, behold so great variety of ideas, so artfully laid together, and so much according to rule; it not being credible, that he would be at the expense (if one may so speak) of all that art and regularity to no purpose?

LXV. [To all which my *answer* is, *first*, that the connexion of ideas does not imply the relation of *cause* and *effect*, but only of a mark or *sign* with the thing *signified*.] ☞ The *fire* which I see is not the cause of the pain I suffer upon my approaching it, but the mark that forewarns me of it. In like manner, the noise that I hear is not the effect of this or that motion or collision of the ambient bodies, but the sign thereof. [*Secondly*, the reason why ideas are formed into machines, that is, artificial and regular combinations, is the same with that for combining letters into words. That a few original ideas may be made to signify a *great number of effects and actions*, it is necessary they be variously combined together: and to the end their use be *permanent and universal*, these combinations must be made by *rule*, and with *wise contrivance*.] By this means abundance of information is conveyed unto us concerning what we are to expect from such and such actions, and what methods are proper to be taken, for the exciting such and such ideas: which in effect is all that I conceive to be distinctly meant, when it is said that by discerning the figure, texture, and mechanism of the inward parts of bodies, whether natural or artificial, we may attain to know the several uses and properties depending thereon, or the nature of the thing.

LXVI. *Proper employment of the natural philosopher.*—Hence it is evident, that those *things* which, *under the notion of a cause co-operating* or concurring *to the production of effects, are altogether inexplicable*, and run us into great absurdities, may be very naturally explained, and have a proper and obvious use assigned them, when they are considered only as marks or signs for our information. [And it is the *searching after, and endeavouring to understand those signs* (this language, if I may so call it) *instituted by the author of nature*, that ought to be the employment of the natural philosopher, and not the pretending to explain things by corporeal causes; which doctrine seems to have too much estranged the minds of men from that active principle, that supreme and wise spirit, "in whom we live, move, and have our being."]

LXVII. *Twelfth objection.—Answer.*—In the twelfth place, it may perhaps be objected, that though it be clear from what has been said, that there can be no such thing as an inert, senseless, extended, solid, figured, moveable substance, existing without the

mind, such as philosophers describe matter: [yet if any man shall leave out of his idea of *matter*, the positive ideas of extension, figure, solidity, and motion, and say that he means only by that word an inert senseless substance, that exists without the mind, or unperceived, which is the *occasion of our ideas*, or at the presence whereof God is pleased to excite ideas in us:] it doth not appear, but that matter taken in this sense may possibly exist. [In *answer* to which I say *first*, that it seems no less absurd to suppose a substance without accidents, than it is to suppose accidents without a substance. But *secondly*, though we should grant this unknown substance may possibly exist, yet *where can it be supposed to be?* that it exists not in the mind is agreed, and that it exists not in place is no less certain; *since all* (place or) *extension exists only in the mind*, as hath been already proved. It remains therefore that it exists no where at all.]

LXVIII. *Matter supports nothing, an argument against its existence.*—Let us examine a little the description that is here given us of *matter*. It neither acts, nor perceives, nor is perceived: for this is all that is meant by saying it is an *inert, senseless, unknown* substance; which is a definition entirely made up of negatives, excepting only the relative notion of its standing under or supporting: but then it must be observed, that it *supports* nothing at all; and how nearly this comes to the description of a *nonentity*, I desire may be considered. But, say you, it is the *unknown occasion, at the presence of which* ideas are excited in us by the will of God. [Now I would fain know how any thing can be *present* to us, which is neither perceivable by sense nor reflection, nor capable of producing any idea in our minds, nor is at all extended, nor hath any form, nor exists in any place.] The words *to be present*, when thus applied, must needs be taken in some abstract and strange meaning, and which I am not able to comprehend.

LXIX. [Again,* let us examine what is meant by *occasion;* so far as I can gather from the common use of language, that word signifies, either the agent which *produces any effect*, or else something that is *observed to accompany*, or go before it, in the ordinary course of things.] But when it is applied to matter as above described, it can be taken in neither of those senses. [For matter is said to be passive and inert, and so cannot be an *agent* or efficient cause. It is also *unperceivable*, as being devoid of all sensible qualities, and so cannot be the occasion of our perceptions in the latter sense:] ☞ as when the *burning my finger* is said to be the occasion of the pain that attends it. What therefore can be meant by calling matter an *occasion?* this term

* Vide sect. lxvii. for the first argument to show that matter is not the *occasion* of our ideas.—Ed.

is either used in no sense at all, or else in some sense very distant from its received signification.

LXX. [You will perhaps say that *matter*, though it be not perceived by us, *is* nevertheless *perceived by God*, to whom it is the occasion of exciting ideas in our minds.] For, say you, since we observe our sensations to be imprinted in an *orderly and constant manner*, it is but reasonable to suppose there are certain constant and regular occasions of their being produced. That is to say, that there are certain permanent and distinct parcels of matter, corresponding to our ideas, which, though they do not excite them in our minds, or any ways immediately affect us, as being altogether passive and unperceivable to us, they are nevertheless to God, by whom they are perceived, as it were so many occasions to remind him when and what ideas to imprint on our minds: *that so things may go on in a constant, uniform manner.*

LXXI. [In *answer* to this I observe, that as the notion of matter is here stated, the question is no longer concerning the existence of a thing distinct from *spirit* and *idea*, from perceiving and being perceived: but whether there are not certain ideas, of I know not what sort, in the mind of God, which are so many marks or notes that direct him how to produce sensations in our minds, in a constant and regular method]: ☞ much after the same manner as a musician is directed by the notes of music to produce that harmonious train and composition of sound, which is called a *tune;* though they who hear the music do not perceive the notes, and may be entirely ignorant of them. But this notion of matter* seems too extravagant to deserve a confutation. [Besides, it is in effect no objection against what we have advanced, to wit, that there is no senseless, *unperceived substance.*]

LXXII. *The order of our perceptions shows the goodness of God, but affords no proof of the existence of matter.*—If we follow the light of reason, we shall, from the constant, uniform method of our sensations, collect the goodness and wisdom of the *spirit* who excites them in our minds. But this is all that I can see reasonably concluded from thence. To me, I say, it is evident that the being of a *spirit infinitely wise, good, and powerful* is abundantly sufficient to explain all the appearances of nature. But as for *inert, senseless matter*, nothing that I perceive has any the least connexion with it, or leads to the thoughts of it. And I would fain see any one explain any the meanest *phenomenon* in nature by it, or show any manner of reason, though in the lowest rank of probability, that he can have for its existence; or even make any tolerable sense or meaning of that supposition. For as to its being an occasion, we have, I think, evidently shown that with regard to us it is no occasion: it remains therefore that

* (Which after all is *the only intelligible one* that I can pick, from what is said of unknown occasions.)—Edit. 1710.

it must be, if at all, the occasion to God of exciting ideas in us; and what this amounts to, we have just now seen.

LXXIII. [It is worth while to reflect a little on the *motives* which induced men *to suppose the existence of material substance*]; that so having observed the gradual ceasing and expiration of those motives or reasons, we may proportionably withdraw the assent that was grounded on them. *First*, therefore, it was thought that colour, figure, motion, and the rest of the sensible qualities or accidents, did really exist without the mind; [and for this reason, it *seemed needful to suppose some unthinking substratum or substance wherein they did exist, since they could not be conceived to exist by themselves.*] *Afterwards, (secondly)* in process of time, men being convinced that colours, sounds, and the rest of the sensible secondary qualities had no existence without the mind, they stripped this *substratum* or material substance of those qualities, leaving only the *primary ones*, figure, motion, and such like, which they still conceived to exist without the mind, and consequently to stand in need of a material support. But it having been shown, that none, even of these, can possibly exist otherwise than in a spirit or mind which perceives them, it follows that we have no longer any reason to suppose the being of *matter*. Nay that it is utterly impossible there should be any such thing, so long as that word is taken to denote an *unthinking substratum* of qualities or accidents, wherein they exist without the mind.

LXXIV. But though it be allowed by the *materialists* themselves, that matter was thought of only for the sake of supporting accidents; and the reason entirely ceasing, one might expect the mind should naturally, and without any reluctance at all, quit the belief of what was solely grounded thereon. Yet the prejudice is riveted so deeply in our thoughts, that we can scarce tell how to part with it, and are therefore inclined, since the *thing* itself is indefensible, at least to retain the *name*; which we apply to I know not what abstracted and indefinite notions of *being* or *occasion*, though without any show of reason, at least so far as I can see. For what is there on our part, or what do we perceive amongst all the ideas, sensations, notions, which are imprinted on our minds, either by sense or reflection, from whence may be inferred the existence of an inert, thoughtless, unperceived occasion? and on the other hand, on the part of an *all-sufficient spirit*, what can there be that should make us believe, or even suspect, he is *directed* by an inert occasion to excite ideas in our minds?

LXXV. *Absurdity of contending for the existence of matter as the occasion of ideas.*—It is a very extraordinary instance of the force of prejudice, and much to be lamented, that the mind of man retains so great a fondness, against all the evidence of reason, for a stupid, thoughtless *somewhat*, by the interposition whereof it would, as it were, screen itself from the providence of God, and

remove him further off from the affairs of the world. But though we do the utmost we can, to secure the belief of *matter*, though when reason forsakes us, we endeavour to support our opinion on the bare possibility of the thing, and though we indulge ourselves in the full scope of an imagination not regulated by reason, to make out that poor *possibility*, yet the upshot of all is, that there are certain *unknown ideas* in the mind of God; for this, if any thing, is all that I conceive to be meant by *occasion* with regard to God. And this, at the bottom, is no longer contending for the *thing*, but for the *name*.

LXXVI. Whether therefore there are such ideas in the mind of God, and whether they may be called by the name *matter*, I shall not dispute. But if you stick to the notion of an *unthinking* substance, or support of extension, motion, and other sensible qualities, then to me is it most evidently impossible there should be any such thing. Since is it a plain repugnancy, that those qualities should exist in or be supported by an unperceiving substance.

LXXVII. *That a substratum not perceived, may exist, unimportant.*—[But say you, though it be granted that there is no thoughtless support of extension, and the other qualities or accidents *which we perceive;* yet there may, perhaps, be some inert unperceiving substance, or *substratum* of *some other qualities*, as imcomprehensible to us as colours are to a man born blind, *because we have not a sense adapted to them.*] But if we had a new sense, we should possibly no more doubt of their existence, than a blind man made to see does of the existence of light and colours. [I answer, *first*, if what you mean by the word *matter* be only the *unknown support of unknown qualities*, it is no matter whether there is such a thing or not, since it no way concerns us: and I do not see the advantage there is in disputing about we know not *what*, and we know not *why*.]

LXXVIII. [But *secondly*, if we had *a new sense*,* it *could only furnish us with new ideas or sensations:* and then we should have the same reason against their existing in an unperceiving substance, that has been already offered with relation to figure, motion, colour, and the like.] Qualities, as hath been shown, are nothing else but *sensations* or *ideas*, which exist only in a *mind* perceiving them; and this is true not only of the ideas we are acquainted with at present, but likewise of all possible ideas whatsoever.

LXXIX. But you will *insist*, what if (1) I have no reason to believe the existence of matter, what if (2) I can assign any use to it, or (3) explain any thing by it, or even (4) conceive what is meant by that word? yet still it is no contradiction to say that matter exists, and that this matter is *in general* a

* Vide sect. cxxxvi.

substance, or *occasion of ideas*; though, indeed, to go about to unfold the meaning, or adhere to any particular explication of those words, may be attended with great difficulties. I *answer*, when words are used without a meaning, you may put them together as you please, without danger of running into a contradiction. You may say, for example, that *twice two* is equal to *seven*, so long as you declare you do not take the words of that proposition in their usual acceptation, but for marks of you know not what. And by the same reason you may say, there is an inert thoughtless substance without accidents, which is the occasion of our ideas. And we shall understand just as much by one proposition, as the other.

LXXX. [In the last place, you will *say*, what if we give up the cause of material substance, and assert, that matter is an unknown *somewhat*, neither substance nor accident, spirit nor idea, inert, thoughtless, indivisible, immoveable, unextended, existing in no place?] for, say you, whatever may be urged against *substance* or *occasion*, or any other positive or relative notion of matter, hath no place at all, so long as this *negative definition of matter* is adhered to. I *answer*, you may, if so it shall seem good, use the word *matter* in the same sense that other men use *nothing*, and so make those terms convertible in your style. For after all, this is what appears to me to be the result of that definition, the parts whereof when I consider with attention, either collectively, or separate from each other, I do not find that there is any kind of effect or impression made on my mind, different from what is excited by the term *nothing*.

LXXXI. [You will *reply* perhaps, that in the foresaid definition is included, what doth *sufficiently* distinguish it from nothing, the positive, abstract idea of *quiddity*, *entity*, or *existence*.] I own indeed, that those who pretend to the faculty of framing abstract general ideas, do talk as if they had such an idea, which is, say they, the most abstract and general notion of all, that is to me the most incomprehensible of all others. That there are a great variety of spirits of different orders and capacities, whose faculties, both in number and extent, are far exceeding those the author of my being has bestowed on me, I see no reason to deny. And for me to pretend to determine by my own few, stinted, narrow inlets of perception, what ideas the inexhaustible power of the supreme spirit may imprint upon them, were certainly the utmost folly and presumption. Since there may be, for ought that I know, innumerable sorts of ideas or sensations, as different from one another, and from all that I have perceived, as colours are from sounds. But how ready soever I may be to acknowledge the scantiness of my comprehension, with regard to the endless variety of spirits and ideas, that might possibly exist, yet for any one to pretend to a notion of entity or existence,

abstracted from *spirit* and *idea*, from perceiving and being perceived, is, I suspect, a downright repugnancy and trifling with words. It remains that we consider the objections which may possibly be made on the part of religion.

LXXXII. *Objections derived from the scriptures answered.**—Some† there are who think, that though the arguments for the real existence of bodies, which are drawn from reason, be allowed not to amount to demonstration, yet (first) the *holy scriptures* are so clear in the point, as will sufficiently convince every good Christian, that bodies do really exist, and are something more than mere ideas; there being in holy writ innumerable facts related, which evidently suppose the reality of timber, and stone, mountains, and rivers, and cities, and human bodies. [To which I *answer*, that no sort of writings whatever, sacred or profane, which use those and the like words in the *vulgar acceptation*, or so as to have a meaning in them, are in danger of having their truth called in question by our doctrine. That all those things do really exist, that there are bodies, even corporeal substances, when taken *in the vulgar sense*, has been shown to be agreeable to our principles]: and the difference betwixt *things* and *ideas*, *realities* and *chimeras*, has been distinctly explained.‡ [And I do not think, that either what philosophers call *matter*, or the existence of objects without the mind, is any where mentioned in scripture.]

LXXXIII. *No objection as to language tenable.*—[Again, whether there be or be not external things, it is agreed on all hands, that the proper use of words is the marking our conceptions, or things *only as they are known and perceived by us*; whence it plainly follows, that in the tenets we have laid down, there is nothing inconsistent with the right use and significancy of *language*, and that discourse of what kind soever, so far as it is intelligible, remains undisturbed.] But all this seems so manifest, from what hath been set forth in the premises, that it is needless to insist any further on it.

LXXXIV. But (secondly)§ it will be urged, that *miracles do*, at least, *lose much of their* stress and *import by our principles.* ☞ What must we think of Moses' rod, was it not *really* turned into a serpent, or was there only a change of *ideas* in the minds of the spectators? And can it be supposed, that our Saviour did no more at the marriage-feast in Cana, than impose on the sight, and smell, and taste of the guests, so as to create in them the appearance or idea only of wine? The same may be said of all other miracles: which, in consequence of the foregoing principles, must be looked upon only as so many cheats, or illusions

* And concluded in sect. xcv. † Malebranche. Vide sect. lxxxiv.
‡ Sect. xxix., xxx., xxxiii., xxxvi., &c. § Sect. lxxxii.

of fancy. To this I reply, that the rod was changed into a real serpent, and the water into real wine. That this doth not, in the least, contradict what I have elsewhere said, will be evident from Sect. XXXIV., XXXV. But this business of *real* and *imaginary* hath been already so plainly and fully explained, and so often referred to, and the difficulties about it are so easily answered from what hath gone before, that it were an affront to the reader's understanding, to resume the explication of it in this place. ☞ I shall only observe, that if at table all who were present should see, and smell, and taste, and drink wine, and find the effects of it, with me there could be no doubt of its reality. [So that at bottom, the scruple concerning real miracles hath no place at all on ours, but only on the received principles, and, consequently, maketh rather *for*, than *against*, what hath been said.]

LXXXV. *Consequences of the preceding tenets.*—Having done with the objections, which I endeavoured to propose in the clearest light, and given them all the force and weight I could, we proceed in the next place to take a view of our tenets *in their consequences.* [Some of these appear at first sight, as that several difficult and obscure questions, on which abundance of speculation hath been thrown away, are entirely banished from philosophy. Whether (1) corporeal substance can think? whether (2) matter be infinitely divisible? and (3) how it operates on spirit? These, and the like inquiries, have given infinite amusement to philosophers in all ages.] But depending on the existence of *matter*, they have no longer any place on our principles. Many other advantages there are, as well with regard to *religion* as the *sciences*, which it is easy for any one to deduce from what hath been premised. But this will appear more plainly in the sequel.*

LXXXVI. *The removal of matter gives certainty to knowledge.*—[From the principles we have laid down, it follows, human knowledge may naturally be reduced to two heads, that of *ideas*, and that of *spirits*.] Of each of these I shall treat in order. And first, as to ideas or unthinking things, our knowledge of these hath been very much obscured and confounded, and we have been led into very dangerous errors, by supposing a twofold existence of the objects of sense, the one *intelligible*, or in the mind, the other *real* and without the mind: whereby unthinking things are thought to have a natural subsistence of their own, distinct from being perceived by spirits. [This, which, if I mistake not, hath been shown to be a most groundless and absurd notion, is *the very root of scepticism*; for so long as men thought that real things subsisted without the mind, and

* (1) Many philosophic speculations banished: (2) Scepticism extirpated: (3) Atheists and fatalists deprived of their chief support: (4) Idolatry exposed: (5) Socinianism refuted.

that their knowledge was only so far forth *real* as it was conformable to *real things*, it follows, they could not be certain that they had any real knowledge at all. For how can it be known, that the things which are perceived are conformable to those which are not perceived, or exist without the mind?]

LXXXVII. Colour, figure, motion, extension, and the like, considered only as so many *sensations* in the mind, are perfectly known, there being nothing in them which is not perceived. But if they are looked on as notes or images, referred to *things* or *archetypes* existing without the mind, then are we involved all in *scepticism*. We see only the appearances, and not the real qualities of things. [What may be the extension, figure, or motion of any thing really and absolutely, or in itself, it is impossible for us to know, but only the *proportion* or the *relation* they bear to our senses.] Things remaining the same, our ideas vary, and which of them, or even whether any of them at all represent the true quality really existing in the thing, it is out of our reach to determine. So that, for ought we know, all we see, hear, and feel, may be only phantom and vain chimera, and not at all agree with the real things, existing in *rerum natura*. All this scepticism follows, from our supposing a difference between *things* and *ideas*, and that the former have a subsistence without the mind, or unperceived. It were easy to dilate on this subject, and show how the arguments urged by sceptics in all ages, depend on the supposition of external objects.*

LXXXVIII. *If there be external matter, neither the nature nor existence of things can be known.*—So long as we attribute a real existence to unthinking things, distinct from their being perceived, it is not only impossible for us to know with evidence (1) the nature of any real unthinking being, but even (2) that it exists. Hence it is, that we see philosophers distrust their senses, and doubt of the existence of heaven and earth, of every thing they see or feel, even of their own bodies. And after all their labour and struggle of thought, they are forced to own, we cannot attain to any self-evident or demonstrative knowledge of the existence of sensible things. But all this doubtfulness, which so bewilders and confounds the mind, and makes *philosophy* ridiculous in the eyes of the world, vanishes, if we annex a meaning to our words, and do not amuse ourselves with the terms *absolute, external, exist*, and such like, signifying we know not what. I can as well doubt of my own being, as of the being of those things which I actually perceive by sense: [it being a manifest contradiction, that any sensible object should be immediately perceived by sight or touch, and, at the same time, have no existence in nature, since the very existence of an unthinking being consists in *being perceived*.]

* "But this is too obvious to need being insisted on."—Edit. 1710.

LXXXIX. *Of thing or being.*—Nothing seems of more importance, towards erecting a firm system of sound and real knowledge, which may be proof against the assaults of scepticism, than to lay the beginning in a distinct explication of what is meant by *thing, reality, existence:* for in vain shall we dispute concerning the real existence of things, or pretend to any knowledge thereof, so long as we have not fixed the meaning of those words. [*Thing* or *being** is the most general name of all; it comprehends under it two kinds entirely distinct and heterogeneous, and which have nothing common but the name, to wit, *spirits* and *ideas.* The former are *active, indivisible* (incorruptible) *substances:* the latter are *inert, fleeting,* (perishable passions,) or *dependent beings,* which subsist not by themselves, but are supported by, or exist in minds or spiritual substances.† We comprehend our own existence by inward feeling or reflection, and that of other spirits by reason. We may be said to have some knowledge or notion of our own minds, of spirits and active beings, whereof, in a strict sense, we have not ideas. In like manner we know and have a notion of relations between things or ideas, which relations are distinct from the ideas or things related, inasmuch as the latter may be perceived by us without our perceiving the former. [To me it seems that ideas, spirits, and relations, are all, in their respective kinds, the object of human knowledge and subject of discourse: and that the term *idea* would be improperly extended to signify every thing we know or have any notion of.]

XC. *External things either imprinted by or perceived by some other mind.*—[Ideas imprinted on the senses are real things, or do really exist; this we do not deny, but we deny (1) they can subsist without the minds which perceive them, or (2) that they are resemblances of any archetypes existing without the mind: (1) since the very being of a sensation or idea consists in being perceived, and (2) an idea can be like nothing but an idea.] [Again, the *things perceived by sense may be termed external,* with regard to their origin, in that they are not generated from within, by the mind itself, but (1) *imprinted by a spirit distinct from that which perceives them.* Sensible objects may likewise be said to be without the mind, in another sense, namely, (2) *when they exist in some other mind.* Thus when I shut my eyes, the things I saw may still exist, but it must be in another mind.]

XCI. *Sensible qualities real.*—It were a mistake to think, that what is here said derogates in the least from the reality of things. [It is acknowledged, on the received principles, that extension, motion, and, in a word, all sensible qualities, have need of a support, as not being able to subsist by themselves. But

* Vide sect. xxxix.

† The remainder of the section does not appear in the edition of 1710.

the objects perceived by sense are allowed to be nothing but combinations of those qualities, and, consequently, cannot subsist by themselves. *Thus far it is agreed on all hands.*] So that in denying the things perceived by sense, an existence independent of a substance, or support wherein they may exist, we detract nothing from the received opinion of their *reality*, and are guilty of no innovation in that respect. All the difference is, that according to us the unthinking beings perceived by sense have no existence distinct from being perceived, and cannot therefore exist in any other substance, than those *unextended, indivisible substances*, or *spirits, which act, and think, and perceive them:* whereas philosophers vulgarly hold, that the sensible qualities exist in an *inert, extended, unperceiving substance*, which they call *matter*, to which they attribute a natural subsistence, exterior to all thinking beings, or distinct from being perceived by any mind whatsoever, even the eternal mind of the Creator, wherein they suppose only ideas of the corporeal substances created by him: if indeed they allow them to be at all *created.*

XCII. *Objections of atheists overturned.*—For as we have shown the doctrine of matter, or corporeal substance, to have been the main pillar and support of scepticism, so likewise upon the same foundation have been raised all the impious schemes of atheism and irreligion. [Nay, so great a difficulty hath it been thought, *to conceive matter produced out of nothing*, that the most celebrated among the ancient philosophers, even of these who maintained the being of a God, have thought matter to be uncreated and coeternal with him.] How great a friend material substance hath been to atheists in all ages, were needless to relate. All their monstrous systems have so visible and necessary a dependence on it, that when this corner-stone is once removed, the whole fabric cannot choose but fall to the ground; insomuch that it is no longer worth while to bestow a particular consideration on the absurdities of every wretched sect of atheists.

XCIII. *And of fatalists also.*—[That impious and profane persons should readily fall in with those systems which favour their inclinations, by deriding immaterial substance, and supposing the soul to be divisible and subject to corruption as the body; which exclude all freedom, intelligence, and design from the formation of things, and instead thereof make a self-existent, stupid, unthinking substance, the root and origin of all beings.] That they should hearken to those who deny a Providence, or inspection of a superior mind over the affairs of the world, attributing the whole series of events either to *blind chance* or *fatal necessity*, arising *from the impulse of one body on another.* All this is very natural. And on the other hand, when men of better principles observe the enemies of religion lay so great a

stress on *unthinking matter*, and all of them use so much industry and artifice to reduce every thing to it; methinks they should rejoice to see them deprived of their grand support, and driven from that only fortress, without which your Epicureans, Hobbists, and the like, have not even the shadow of a pretence, but become the most cheap and easy triumph in the world.

XCIV. *Of Idolaters.*—The existence of matter, or bodies unperceived, has not only been the main support of atheists and fatalists, but [on the same principle doth *idolatry* likewise in all its various forms depend.] Did men but consider that the sun, moon, and stars, and every other object of the senses, are only so many sensations in their minds, which have no other existence but barely being perceived, doubtless they would never fall down and worship their own *ideas*; but rather address their homage to that eternal invisible Mind which produces and sustains all things.

XCV. *And Socinians.*—The same absurd principle, by mingling itself with the articles of our faith, hath occasioned no small difficulties to Christians. [☞ For example, about the resurrection, how many scruples and objections have been raised by Socinians and others? But do not the most plausible of them depend on the supposition, that a body is denominated the same, with regard not to the form or *that which is perceived by sense*, but the material substance which remains the same under several forms?] Take away this *material substance*, about the identity whereof all the dispute is, and mean by *body* what every plain ordinary person means by that word, to wit, that which is immediately seen and felt, which is only a combination of sensible qualities, or ideas: and then their most unanswerable objections come to nothing.*

XCVI. *Summary of the consequences of expelling matter.*—Matter being once expelled out of nature, drags with it so many sceptical and impious notions, such an incredible number of disputes and puzzling questions, which have been thorns in the sides of divines, as well as philosophers, and made so much fruitless work for mankind; that if the arguments we have produced against it are not found equal to demonstration (as to me they evidently seem), yet I am sure all friends to knowledge, peace, and religion, have reason to wish they were.

XCVII. BESIDE the external existence of the objects of perception, another great source of errors and difficulties, with regard to ideal knowledge, is the doctrine of *abstract ideas*, such as it hath been set forth in the introduction. The plainest things in the world, those we are most intimately acquainted with, and perfectly know, when they are considered in an abstract way, appear strangely difficult and incomprehensible. Time, place,

* The answers to objections on the ground of religion, which are concluded in this section, were commenced in sect. lxxxii.

and motion, taken in particular or concrete, are what every body knows; but having passed through the hands of a metaphysician, they become too abstract and fine to be apprehended by men of ordinary sense. Bid your servant meet you at such a *time*, in such a *place*, and he shall never stay to deliberate on the meaning of those words: in conceiving that particular time and place, or the motion by which he is to get thither, he finds not the least difficulty. But if *time* be taken, exclusive of all those particular actions and ideas that diversify the day, merely for the *continuation of existence*, or duration in abstract, then it will perhaps gravel even a philosopher to comprehend it.

XCVIII. *Dilemma.*—(For my own part,) whenever I attempt to frame a simple idea of *time*, abstracted from the succession of ideas in my mind, which flows uniformly, and is participated by all beings, I am lost and embrangled in inextricable difficulties. I have no notion of it at all, only I hear others say, it is infinitely divisible, and speak of it in such a manner as leads me to entertain odd thoughts of my existence; [since that doctrine lays one under an absolute necessity of thinking, either (1) that he passes away innumerable ages without a thought, or else (2) that he is annihilated every moment of his life:] both which seem equally absurd. [Time therefore being nothing, *abstracted from the succession of ideas in our minds*, it follows that the duration of any finite spirit must be estimated *by the number of ideas or actions* succeeding each other in that spirit or mind. Hence it is a plain consequence that the soul always thinks:* and in truth, whoever shall go about to divide in his thoughts, or abstract the *existence* of a spirit from its *cogitation*, will, I believe, find it no easy task.

XCIX. So likewise, when we attempt to abstract *extension* and *motion* from all other qualities, and consider them by themselves, we presently lose sight of them, and run into great extravagancies.† [All which depend on a twofold abstraction: first, it is supposed that extension, for example, may be abstracted from all other sensible qualities; and secondly, that the entity of extension may be abstracted from its being perceived.] But whoever shall reflect, and take care to understand what he says, will, if I mistake not, acknowledge that all sensible qualities are alike *sensations*, and alike *real*; that where the extension is, there is the colour too, to wit, in his mind, and that their archetypes can exist only in some other *mind*: and that the objects of sense are nothing but those sensations combined, blended, or (if one may so speak) concreted together: none of all which can be supposed to exist unperceived.

C. What it is for a man to be happy, or an object of good,

* Vide Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding, Book ii. ch. i. sect. 10.

† "Hence spring those odd paradoxes *that the fire is not hot*, nor *the wall white*, &c., or that heat and colour are in the objects, nothing but figure and motion."—Edit. 1710.

of *happiness*, prescinded from all particular pleasure, or of *goodness*, from every thing that is good, this is what few can pretend to. [So likewise, a man may be just and virtuous, without having precise ideas of *justice* and *virtue*. The opinion that those and the like words stand for general notions *abstracted from all particular persons and actions*, seems to have rendered morality difficult, and the study thereof of less use to mankind.] And in effect,* the doctrine of *abstraction* has not a little contributed towards spoiling the most useful parts of knowledge.

CI. *Of natural philosophy and mathematics.*—The two great provinces of speculative science, conversant about ideas received from sense and their relations, are *natural philosophy* and *mathematics;* with regard to each of these I shall make some observations. And first, I shall say somewhat of natural philosophy. On this subject it is that the sceptics triumph: all that stock of arguments they produce to depreciate our faculties, and make mankind appear ignorant and low, are drawn principally from this head, to wit, that we are under an invincible blindness as to the *true* and *real* nature of things. This they exaggerate, and love to enlarge on. We are miserably bantered, say they, by our senses, and amused only with the outside and show of things. The real essence, the internal qualities, and constitution of every the meanest object, is hid from our view; something there is in every drop of water, every grain of sand, which it is beyond the power of human understanding to fathom or comprehend. But it is evident from what has been shown, that all this complaint is groundless, and that we are influenced by false principles to that degree as to mistrust our senses, and think we know nothing of those things which we perfectly comprehend.

CII. [One great inducement to our pronouncing ourselves ignorant of the nature of things, is the current opinion *that every thing includes within itself the cause of its properties:* or that there is in each object an inward essence, which is the source whence its discernible qualities flow, and whereon they depend. Some† have pretended to account for appearances by *occult qualities*, but of late they are mostly resolved into *mechanical causes*, ‡ to wit, the figure, *motion*, *weight*, and such like qualities of insensible particles: whereas in truth there is no other agent or efficient cause than *spirit*, it being evident that motion, as well as all other *ideas*, is perfectly inert. See Sect. XXV. Hence, to endeavour to explain the production of colours or sounds, by figure, motion,

* "One may make a great progress in *school ethics*, without ever being the wiser or better man for it, or knowing how to behave himself, in the affairs of life, more to the advantage of himself, or his neighbours, than he did before. This hint may suffice to let any one see that."—Edit. 1710.

† The Peripatetics.

‡ By the Cartesians. Vide Reid on the Intellectual Powers, Essay ii. ch. xviii. sect. 6, 7. Edit. 1843.

every one may think he knows. But to frame an abstract idea magnitude, and the like, must needs be labour in vain.* And accordingly, we see the attempts of that kind are not at all satisfactory. Which may be said, in general, of those instances, wherein one *idea* or *quality* is assigned for the cause of another. [I need not say, how many hypotheses and speculations are left out, and how much the study of nature is abridged by this doctrine.]

CIII. *Attraction signifies the effect, not the manner or cause.*—The great mechanical principle now in vogue is *attraction.* That a stone falls to the earth, or the sea swells towards the moon, may to some appear sufficiently explained thereby. But how are we enlightened by being told this is done by attraction? Is it that that word signifies the manner of the tendency, and that it is by the mutual drawing of bodies, instead of their being impelled or protruded towards each other? but nothing is determined of the manner or action, and it may as truly (for ought we know) be termed *impulse*, or *protrusion*, as *attraction.* Again, the parts of steel we see cohere firmly together, and this also is accounted for by attraction; but in this, as in the other instances, I do not perceive that any thing is signified besides the *effect* itself: for as to the *manner* of the action whereby it is produced, or the *cause* which produces it, these are not so much as aimed at.

CIV. Indeed, if we take a view of the several phenomena, and compare them together, we may observe some likeness and conformity between them. ☞ For example, in the falling of a stone to the ground, in the rising of the sea towards the moon, in cohesion and crystallization, there is something alike, namely a union or mutual approach of bodies. So that any one of these or the like phenomena, may not seem strange or surprising to a man who hath nicely observed and compared the effects of nature. For that only is thought so which is uncommon, or a thing by itself, and out of the ordinary course of our observation. That bodies should tend towards the centre of the earth, is not thought strange, because it is what we perceive every moment of our lives. But that they should have a like gravitation towards the centre of the moon, may seem odd and unaccountable to most men, because it is discerned only in the tides. But a philosopher, whose thoughts take in a larger compass of nature, having observed a certain similitude of appearances, as well in the heavens as the earth, that argue innumerable bodies to have a mutual tendency towards each other, which he denotes by the general name *attraction*, whatever can be reduced to that, he thinks justly accounted for. Thus he explains the tides by the attraction of the terraqueous globe towards the moon, which to him doth not

* Because they are inert.

appear odd or anomalous, but only a particular example of a general rule or law of nature.

CV. If therefore we consider the *difference* there is *betwixt natural philosophers and other men*, with regard to their knowledge of the phenomena, we shall find it consists, [not in an exacter knowledge of the *efficient cause* that produces them, for that can be no other than the *will of a spirit*, but only in *a greater largeness of comprehension, whereby analogies, harmonies, and agreements are discovered in the works of nature, and the particular effects explained*,] that is, reduced to general rules (see Sect. LXII.), which rules, grounded on the analogy and uniformness observed in the production of natural effects, are most agreeable, and sought after by the mind; [for that they extend our prospect beyond what is present, and near to us, and enable us to make *very probable conjectures*, touching things that may have happened at very great distances of time and place, as well as to predict things to come;] which sort of endeavour towards omniscience is much affected by the mind.

CVI. *Caution as to the use of analogies.*—[But we should proceed warily in such things:* for we are apt to lay too great a stress on analogies, and to the prejudice of truth, humour that eagerness of the mind, whereby it is carried to extend its knowledge into general theorems.] ☞ For example, gravitation, or mutual attraction, because it appears in many instances, some are straightway for pronouncing *universal;* and that to *attract, and be attracted by every other body, is an essential quality inherent in all bodies whatsoever.* Whereas it appears the *fixed stars* have no such tendency towards each other: and so far is that gravitation from being *essential* to bodies, that in some instances a quite contrary principle seems to show itself; as in the perpendicular *growth of plants*, and the *elasticity of the air.* There is nothing *necessary or essential in the case*, but it depends entirely on the will of the *governing spirit*, who causes certain bodies to cleave together, or tend towards each other, according to various laws, whilst he keeps others at a fixed distance; and to some he gives a quite contrary tendency to fly asunder, just as he sees convenient.

CVII. After what has been premised, I think we may lay down *the following conclusions. First*, it is plain philosophers amuse themselves in vain, when they inquire for any natural efficient cause distinct from a *mind* or *spirit. Secondly*, considering the whole creation is the workmanship of a *wise and good agent*,

* Vide Reid on the Intellectual Powers, Essay i. ch. iv. sect. 4. et seq. 8vo. edit. 1843.

† "For besides that this could prove a very pleasing entertainment to the mind, it might be of great advantage,‡ in that it not only discovers to us the (1) *attributes of the Creator*, but may also direct us in several instances to the (2) *proper uses and applications of things.*

it should seem to become philosophers to employ their thoughts (contrary to what some hold) about the *final causes of things:** [(3) and I must confess, I see no reason why pointing out *the various ends* to which natural things are adapted, and for which they were originally with unspeakable wisdom contrived, should not be thought one good way of accounting for them,] and altogether worthy a philosopher. *Thirdly*, from what hath been premised no reason can be drawn, why the *history of nature should* not still *be studied*, and observations and experiments made, which, that they are of use to mankind, and enable us to draw any general conclusions, is not the result of any *immutable habitudes*, or relations between things themselves, but only of God's goodness and kindness to men in the administration of the world. See Sect. XXX., XXXI. *Fourthly*, by a diligent observation of the phenomena within our view, we may *discover the general laws of nature, and from them deduce the other phenomena*, I do not say *demonstrate;* for all deductions of that kind depend on a supposition that the Author of nature always operates uniformly, and in a constant observance of those rules we take for principles: *which we cannot evidently know.*

CVIII. *Three analogies.*—†Those men who frame general rules from the phenomena, and afterwards derive the phenomena from those rules, seem to consider signs rather than causes. A man may well understand natural signs without knowing their *analogy* or being able to (1) *say* by what rule a thing is so or so.‡ [And as it is very possible (2) to *write* improperly *through too strict an observance of general grammar rules:* so in arguing from general rules of nature, it is not impossible we may extend the analogy too far, and by that means run into mistakes.]

CIX. [As in (3) *reading* other books, a wise man will choose to fix his thoughts on the *sense* and apply it to use, rather than lay them out in *grammatical remarks* on the language; so in perusing the volume of nature, it seems beneath the dignity of the mind to affect an exactness in reducing *each particular phenomenon to general rules*, or showing how it follows from them.] We should propose to ourselves nobler views, such as (1) to recreate and exalt the mind, with a prospect of the beauty, *order*, extent, and

* This advantage threefold: (1) it would help in discovering the attributes of the Creator; (2) in directing us to the proper uses of things; (3) in pointing out the ends to which natural things are adapted.

† (1) Speaking. (2) Writing. (3) Reading.

‡ In the edition of 1710, sect. cviii. commences as follows: "It appears from sect. lxvi. (66) that the steady, consistent methods of nature may not unfitly be styled the language of its Author, by which he discovers his attributes to our view, and directs us how to act for the convenience and felicity of life. And to me, those men who frame general rules from the *phenomena*, and afterwards derive the *phenomena* from those rules, seem to be grammarians, and their art the grammar of nature. [Two ways there are of learning a language, either by *rule* or by *practice*.] A man may be well read in the language of nature, without understanding the grammar of it, or being able to say by what rule a thing is so or so.

variety of natural things: hence, by proper inferences, (2) to enlarge our notions of the grandeur, wisdom, and beneficence of the Creator: and lastly, (3) to make the several parts of the creation, so far as in us lies, subservient to the ends they were designed for, God's glory, and the sustentation and comfort of ourselves and fellow-creatures.

CX. The best key for the aforesaid analogy, or natural science, will be easily acknowledged to be a certain celebrated treatise of *mechanics:** in the entrance of which justly admired treatise, time, space, and motion, are distinguished into *absolute* and *relative, true* and *apparent, mathematical* and *vulgar:* [which distinction, as it is at large explained by the author, doth suppose those quantities to have an existence without the mind: and that they are ordinarily conceived with relation to sensible things, to which nevertheless, in their own nature, they bear no relation at all.]

CXI. As for *time,* as it is there taken in an absolute or abstracted sense, for the duration or perseverance of the existence of things, I have nothing more to add concerning it, after what hath been already said on that subject, Sect. XCVII., XCVIII. For the rest, this celebrated author holds there is an *absolute space,* which, being unperceivable to sense, remains in itself similar and immoveable: and relative space to be the measure thereof, which being moveable, and defined by its situation in respect of sensible bodies, is vulgarly taken for immoveable space. *Place* he defines to be that part of space which is occupied by any body. And according as the space is absolute or relative, so also is the place. *Absolute motion* is said to be the translation of a body from absolute place to absolute place, as relative motion is from one relative place to another. And because the parts of absolute space do not fall under our senses, instead of them we are obliged to use their sensible measures: and so define both place and motion with respect to bodies, which we regard as immoveable. But it is said, in philosophical matters we must *abstract* from our senses, since it may be, that none of those bodies which seem to be quiescent, are truly so: and the same thing which is moved relatively, may be really at rest. As likewise one and the same body may be in relative rest and motion, or even moved with contrary relative motions at the same time, according as its place is variously defined. All which ambiguity is to be found in the apparent motions, but not at all

* This section is much altered and abridged from the edition of 1710, in which the commencement is thus given: "The best grammar of the kind we are speaking of, will be easily acknowledged to be a treatise of Mechanics, demonstrated and applied to nature, by a philosopher of a neighbouring nation, whom all the world admire.† I shall not take upon me to make remarks on that extraordinary person: only some things he has advanced, so directly opposite to the doctrine we have hitherto laid down, that we should be wanting in the regard due to the authority of so great a man, did we not take some notice of them."

† *Newton.*

in the true or absolute, which should therefore be alone regarded in philosophy. And the true, we are told, are distinguished from apparent or relative motions by the following properties. First, in true or absolute motion, all *parts* which preserve the same position with respect to the whole, partake of the motions of the whole. Secondly, the *place* being moved, that which is placed therein is also moved: so that a body moving in a place which is in motion, doth participate the motion of its place. Thirdly, *true motion* is never generated or changed, otherwise than by force impressed on the *body itself.* Fourthly, true motion is always changed by *force impressed* on the *body moved.* Fifthly, in circular motion *barely relative,* there is no centrifugal force, which nevertheless in that which is true or absolute, is proportional to the quantity of motion.

CXII. *Motion, whether real or apparent, relative.*—But notwithstanding what hath been said, it doth not appear to me, that there can be any motion other than *relative:* so that to conceive motion, there must be at least conceived two bodies, whereof the distance or position in regard to each other is varied. Hence if there was one only body in being, it could not possibly be moved. This seems evident, in that the idea I have of motion doth necessarily include relation.*

CXIII. *Apparent motion denied.*—But though in every motion it be necessary to conceive more bodies than one, yet it may be that one only is moved, namely that on which the force causing the change of distance is impressed, or in other words, that to which the action is applied. For however some may define relative motion, so as to term that body *moved,* which changes its distance from some other body, whether the force or action causing that change were applied to it, or no: yet as relative motion is that which is perceived by sense, and regarded in the ordinary affairs of life, it should seem that every man of common sense knows what it is, as well as the best philosopher: now I ask any one, whether in this sense of motion as he walks along the streets, the stones he passes over may be said to *move,* because they change distance with his feet? [To me it seems, that though motion includes a relation of one thing to another, yet *it is not necessary that each term of the relation be denominated from it.*] As a man may think of somewhat which doth not think, so a body may be moved to or from another body, which is not therefore itself in motion.†

CXIV. As the *place* happens to be variously defined, the motion which is related to it varies. ☞ A man in a ship may

* "This to me seems very evident, in that the idea I have of motion does necessarily involve *relation* in it. Whether others can conceive it otherwise, a little attention may satisfy them."—Edit. 1710, 8vo.

† "I mean *relative* motion, for other I am not able to conceive."—Edit. 1710.

be said to be quiescent, with relation to the sides of the vessel, and yet move with relation to the land. Or he may move eastward in respect of the one, and westward in respect of the other. In the common affairs of life, men never go beyond the earth to define the place of any body: and what is quiescent in respect of that, is accounted *absolutely* to be so. But philosophers, who have a greater extent of thought, and juster notions of the system of things, discover even the earth itself to be moved. [In order therefore to fix their notions, they seem to conceive the corporeal world as finite, and the utmost unmoved walls or shell thereof to be the place whereby they estimate true motions.] If we sound our own conceptions, I believe we may find all the absolute motion we can frame an idea of, to be at bottom no other than relative motion thus defined. For as hath been already observed, absolute motion exclusive of all external relation is incomprehensible: and to this kind of relative motion, all the above-mentioned properties, causes, and effects ascribed to absolute motion, will, if I mistake not, be found to agree. As to what is said of the centrifugal force, that it doth not at all belong to circular relative motion: I do not see how this follows from the experiment which is brought to prove it. See *Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica, in Schol. Def.* VIII. For the water in the vessel, at that time wherein it is said to have the greatest relative circular motion, hath, I think, no motion at all; as is plain from the foregoing section.

CXV. [For to denominate a body *moved*, it is requisite, *first*, that it change its distance or situation with regard to some other body: and *secondly*, that the force or action occasioning that change be applied to it.] If either of these be wanting, I do not think that agreeable to the sense of mankind, or the propriety of language, a body can be said to be in motion. I grant indeed, that it is possible for us to think a body, which we see change its distance from some other, to be moved, though it have no force applied to it, (in which sense there may be apparent motion,) but then it is, because the force causing the change of distance is *imagined* by us to be applied or impressed on that body thought to move. Which indeed shows we are capable of mistaking a thing to be in motion which is not, and that is all; *but does not prove that, in the common acceptation of *motion*, a body is moved merely because it changes distance from another; since as soon as we are undeceived, and find that the moving force was not communicated to it, we no longer hold it to be moved. [So on the other hand, when one only body, the parts whereof preserve a given position between themselves, is imagined to exist; some there are who think that it can be moved

* The remainder of the section is taken from the edition of 1710.

all manner of ways, though without any change of distance or situation to any other bodies; which we should not deny, if they meant only that it might have an impressed force, which, *upon the bare creation of other bodies, would produce a motion of some certain quantity* and determination.] But that an actual motion (distinct from the impressed force, or power productive of change of place, in case there were bodies present whereby to define it) can exist in such a single body, I must confess I am not able to comprehend.

CXVI. *Any idea of pure space relative.*—From what hath been said, it follows that *the philosophic consideration of motion doth not imply the being of an absolute space*, distinct from that which is perceived by sense, and related to bodies: which that it cannot exist without the mind, is clear upon the same principles, that demonstrate the like of all other objects of sense. And perhaps, if we inquire narrowly, we shall find we cannot even frame an idea of *pure space exclusive of all body.* This, I must confess, seems impossible, as being a most abstract idea. When I excite a motion in some part of my body, if it be free or without resistance, I say there is *space:* but if I find a resistance, then I say there is *body:* and in proportion as the resistance to motion is lesser or greater, I say the *space* is more or less *pure.* So that when I speak of pure or empty space, it is not to be supposed, that the word *space* stands for an idea distinct from, or conceivable without body and motion. Though indeed *we are apt to think every noun substantive stands for a distinct idea*, that may be separated from all others: which hath occasioned infinite mistakes. [When therefore supposing, all the world to be annihilated besides my own body, I say there still remains *pure space:* thereby nothing else is meant, but only that I conceive it possible for the limbs of my body to be moved on all sides without the least resistance: but if that too were annihilated, then there could be no motion, and consequently no space.] Some perhaps may think the sense of seeing doth furnish them with the idea of pure space; but it is plain from what we have elsewhere shown, that the ideas of space and distance are not obtained by that sense. See the Essay concerning Vision.

CXVII. What is here laid down seems to put an end to all those disputes and difficulties which have sprung up amongst the learned concerning the nature of *pure space.* [But the chief advantage arising from it is, that we are freed from that dangerous *dilemma*, to which several who have employed their thoughts on this subject imagine themselves reduced, to wit, of thinking either that real space is God, or else that there is something beside God which is eternal, uncreated, infinite, indivisible, immutable.] Both which may justly be thought pernicious and absurd notions. It is certain that not a few divines, as well as

philosophers of great note, have, from the difficulty they found in conceiving either limits or annihilation of space, concluded it must be *divine*. And some of late have set themselves particularly to show, that the incommunicable attributes of God agree to it. Which doctrine, how unworthy soever it may seem of the divine nature, yet I do not see how we can get clear of it, so long as we adhere to the received opinions.

CXVIII. *The errors arising from the doctrines of abstraction and external material existences, influence mathematical reasonings.*—Hitherto of *natural philosophy:* we come now to make some inquiry concerning that other great branch of speculative knowledge, to wit, *mathematics*. These, how celebrated soever they may be for their clearness and certainty of demonstration, which is hardly any where else to be found, cannot nevertheless be supposed altogether free from mistakes, if in their principles there lurks some secret error, which is common to the professors of those sciences with the rest of mankind. Mathematicians, though they deduce their theorems from a great height of evidence, yet their first principles are limited by the consideration of quantity: and they do not ascend into any inquiry concerning those transcendental maxims, which influence all the particular sciences, each part whereof, mathematics not excepted, doth consequently participate of the errors involved in them. That the principles laid down by mathematicians are true, and their way of deduction from those principles clear and incontestable, we do not deny. But we hold, there may be certain erroneous maxims of greater extent than the object of mathematics, and for that reason not expressly mentioned, though tacitly supposed throughout the whole progress of that science; and that the ill effects of those secret, unexamined errors are diffused through all the branches thereof. [To be plain, we suspect the mathematicians are, as well as other men, concerned in the errors (1) arising from the doctrine of abstract general ideas, and (2) the existence of objects without the mind.]

CXIX. *Arithmetic* hath been thought to have for its object *abstract* ideas of *number*. Of which to understand the properties and mutual habitudes is supposed no mean part of speculative knowledge. The opinion of the pure and intellectual nature of numbers in abstract, hath made them in esteem with those philosophers, who seem to have affected an uncommon fineness and elevation of thought. It hath set a price on the most trifling numerical speculations, which in practice are of no use, but serve only for amusement: and hath therefore so far infected the minds of some, that they have dreamt of mighty *mysteries* involved in numbers, and attempted the explication of natural things by them. But if we inquire into our own thoughts, and consider what hath been premised, we may perhaps entertain a

low opinion of those high flights and abstractions, and look on all inquiries about numbers, only as so many *difficiles nugæ*, so far as they are not subservient to practice, and promote the benefit of life.

CXX. [*Unity in abstract* we have before considered in Sect. XIII., from which and what has been said in the Introduction, it plainly follows *there is not any such idea*. But number being defined a *collection of units*, we may conclude that, if there be no such thing as unity or unit in abstract, there are no ideas of number *in abstract* denoted by the numeral names and figures.] The theories therefore in arithmetic, if they are abstracted from the names and figures, as likewise from all use and practice, as well as from the particular things numbered, can be supposed to have nothing at all for their object. Hence we may see, how entirely the science of numbers is subordinate to practice, and how jejune and trifling it becomes, when considered as a matter of mere speculation.

CXXI. However since there may be some, who, deluded by the specious show of discovering abstracted verities, waste their time in arithmetical theorems and problems, which have not any use: it will not be amiss, if we more fully consider, and expose the vanity of that pretence; and this will plainly appear, by taking a view of arithmetic in its infancy, and observing what it was that originally put men on the study of that science, and to what scope they directed it. It is natural to think that at first men, for ease of memory and help of computation, made use of counters, or in writing of single strokes, points, or the like, each whereof was made to signify a unit, that is, some one thing of whatever kind they had occasion to reckon. Afterwards they found out the more compendious ways, of making one character stand in place of several strokes, or points. And lastly, the notation of the Arabians or Indians came into use, wherein, by the repetition of a few characters or figures, and varying the signification of each figure according to the place it obtains, all numbers may be most aptly expressed: which seems to have been done in imitation of language, so that an exact analogy is observed betwixt the notation by figures and names, the nine simple figures answering the nine first numeral names and places in the former, corresponding to denominations in the latter. And agreeably to those conditions of the simple and local value of figures, were contrived methods of finding from the given figures or marks of the parts, what figures, and how placed, are proper to denote the whole, or *vice versâ*. And having found the sought figures, the same rule or analogy being observed throughout, it is easy to read them into words; and so the number becomes perfectly known. For then the number of any particular things is said to be known, when we know the names or figures (with

their due arrangement) that according to the standing analogy belong to them. For these signs being known, we can, by the operations of arithmetic, know the signs of any part of the particular sums signified by them; and thus computing in signs (because of the connexion established betwixt them and the distinct multitudes of things, whereof one is taken for a unit), we may be able rightly to sum up, divide, and proportion the things themselves that we intend to number.

CXXII. [In *arithmetic* therefore we regard not the *things* but the *signs*, which nevertheless are not regarded for their own sake, but because they *direct us how to act* with relation to things, and dispose rightly of them.] [Now agreeably to what we have before observed of words in general (Sect. XIX. Introd.), it happens here likewise, that abstract ideas are thought to be signified by numeral names or characters, while they do not suggest *ideas of particular things* to our minds.] I shall not at present enter into a more particular dissertation on this subject; but only observe that it is evident from what hath been said, those things which pass for abstract truths and theorems concerning numbers are, in reality, conversant about no object distinct from particular numerable things, except only names and characters; which originally came to be considered on no other account but their being *signs*, or capable to represent aptly whatever particular things men had need to compute. Whence it follows, that to study them for their own sake would be just as wise, and to as good purpose, as if a man, neglecting the true use or original intention and subserviency of language, should spend his time in impertinent criticisms upon words, or reasonings and controversies purely verbal.

CXXIII. From numbers we proceed to speak of *extension*, which considered as relative, is the object of *geometry*. The *infinite* divisibility of *finite* extension, though it is not expressly laid down, either as an axiom or theorem in the elements of that science, yet is throughout the same every where supposed, and thought to have so inseparable and essential a connexion with the principles and demonstrations in geometry, that mathematicians never admit it into doubt, or make the least question of it. And as this notion is the source from whence do spring all those amusing geometrical paradoxes, which have such a direct repugnancy to the plain common sense of mankind, and are admitted with so much reluctance into a mind not yet debauched by learning; so is it the principal occasion of all that nice and extreme subtilty, which renders the study of *mathematics* so difficult and tedious. [Hence, if we can make it appear that no finite extension contains innumerable parts, or is infinitely divisible, it follows that we shall at once clear the science of geometry from a great number of difficulties and contradictions, which have ever been esteemed a reproach to human reason, and withal make the

attainment thereof a business of much less time and pains than it hitherto hath been.]

CXXIV. [Every particular *finite extension*, which may possibly be the object of our thought, is an *idea* existing only in the mind, and consequently *each part thereof* must be perceived. If therefore I cannot perceive innumerable parts in any finite extension that I consider, it is certain that they are not contained in it]: but it is evident, that I cannot distinguish innumerable parts in any particular line, surface, or solid, which I either perceive by sense, or figure to myself in my mind: wherefore I conclude they are not contained in it. Nothing can be plainer to me, than that the extensions I have in view are no other than my own ideas, and it is no less plain, that I cannot resolve any one of my ideas into an infinite number of other ideas, that is, that they are not infinitely divisible. If by *finite extension* be meant something distinct from a finite idea, I declare I do not know what that is, and so cannot affirm or deny any thing of it. But if the terms *extension*, *parts*, and the like, are taken in any sense conceivable, that is, for ideas; then to say a finite quantity or extension consists of parts infinite in number, is so manifest a contradiction, that every one at first sight acknowledges it to be so. And it is impossible it should ever gain the assent of any reasonable creature, who is not brought to it by gentle and slow degrees, as a converted gentile to the belief of *transubstantiation*. Ancient and rooted prejudices do often pass into principles: and those propositions which once obtain the force and credit of a *principle*, are not only themselves, but likewise whatever is deducible from them, thought privileged from all examination. And there is no absurdity so gross, which by this means the mind of man may not be prepared to swallow.

CXXV. [(1) He whose understanding is prepossessed with the *doctrine of abstract general ideas*, may be persuaded, that (whatever be thought of the ideas of sense) extension in *abstract* is infinitely divisible. (2) And one who thinks the objects of sense exist *without the mind*, will perhaps in virtue thereof be brought to admit, that a line but an inch long may contain innumerable parts really existing, though too small to be discerned.] These errors are grafted as well in the minds of *geometricians*, as of other men, and have a like influence on their reasonings; and it were no difficult thing, to show how the arguments from geometry, made use of to support the infinite divisibility of extension, are bottomed on them. [At present we shall only observe in general, whence it is that the mathematicians are all so fond and tenacious of this doctrine.

CXXVI. It hath been observed in another place, that the theorems and demonstrations in geometry are conversant about *universal* ideas. Sect. xv. Introd.] Where it is explained in

what sense this *ought* to be understood, to wit, that the particular lines and figures included in the diagram, are supposed to stand for innumerable others of different sizes: or in other words, the geometer considers them abstracting from their magnitude: which doth not imply that he forms an abstract idea, but only that he cares not what the particular magnitude is, whether great or small, but looks on that as a thing indifferent to the demonstration: [hence it follows, that a line in the scheme, but an inch long, must be spoken of as though it contained ten thousand parts, since it is regarded not in itself, but as it is universal; and it is universal only in its signification, whereby it represents innumerable lines greater than itself, in which may be distinguished ten thousand parts or more, though there may not be above an inch in it. After this manner *the properties of the lines signified are (by a very usual figure) transferred to the sign*, and thence through mistake thought to appertain to it considered in its own nature.]

CXXVII. Because there is no number of parts so great, but it is possible there may be a line containing more, the inch-line is said to contain parts more than any assignable number; which is true, not of the inch taken absolutely, but only for the things signified by it. But men not retaining that distinction in their thoughts, slide into a belief that the small particular line described on paper contains in itself parts innumerable. There is no such thing as the ten-thousandth part of an *inch;* but there is of a *mile* or *diameter of the earth*, which may be signified by that inch. When therefore I delineate a triangle on paper, and take one side not above an inch, for example, in length, to be the *radius;* this I consider as divided into ten thousand or a hundred thousand parts, or more. For though the ten thousandth part of that line, considered in itself, is nothing at all, and consequently may be neglected without any error or inconveniency; yet these described lines being only marks standing for greater quantities, whereof it may be the ten-thousandth part is very considerable, it follows, that to prevent notable errors in practice, the *radius* must be taken of ten thousand parts, or more.

CXXVIII. *Lines which are infinitely divisible.*—From what hath been said the reason is plain why, to the end any theorem may become universal in its use, it is necessary we speak of the lines described on paper, as though they contained parts which really they do not. In doing of which, if we examine the matter throughly, we shall perhaps discover that we cannot conceive an inch itself as consisting of, or being divisible into a thousand parts, [but only some other line which is far greater than an inch, and represented by it.] And that when we say a line is *infinitely divisible*, we must mean a line which is *infinitely great*. What we have here observed seems to be the chief cause,

why to suppose the infinite divisibility of finite extension hath been thought necessary in geometry.

CXXIX. The several *absurdities* and contradictions which flowed *from this false principle* might, one would think, have been esteemed so many demonstrations against it. [But by I know not what *logic*, it is held that proofs *à posteriori* are not to be admitted against propositions relating to infinity. As though it were not impossible even for an infinite mind to reconcile contradictions. Or as if any thing absurd and repugnant could have a necessary connexion with truth, or flow from it.] But whoever considers the weakness of this pretence, will think it was contrived on purpose to humour the laziness of the mind, which had rather acquiesce in an indolent scepticism, than be at the pains to go through with a severe examination of those principles it hath ever embraced for true.

CXXX. Of late the *speculations about infinites* have run so high, and grown to such strange notions, as have occasioned no small scruples and disputes among the geometers of the present age. Some there are of great note, who, not content with holding that finite lines may be divided into an infinite number of parts, do yet further maintain, that each of those infinitesimals is itself subdivisible into an infinity of other parts, or infinitesimals of a second order, and so on *ad infinitum*. These, I say, assert there are infinitesimals of infinitesimals of infinitesimals, without ever coming to an end. So that according to them an inch doth not barely contain an infinite number of parts, but an infinity of an infinity of an infinity *ad infinitum* of parts. Others there be who hold all orders of infinitesimals below the first to be nothing at all, thinking it with good reason absurd, to imagine there is any positive quantity or part of extension, which though multiplied infinitely, can ever equal the smallest given extension. And yet on the other hand it seems no less absurd, to think the square, cube, or other power of a positive real root, should itself be nothing at all; which they who hold infinitesimals of the first order, denying all of the subsequent orders, are obliged to maintain.

CXXXI. *Objection of mathematicians.—Answer.*—Have we not therefore reason to conclude, that they are *both* in the wrong, and that there is in effect no such thing as parts infinitely small, or an infinite number of parts contained in any finite quantity? But you will say, that if this doctrine obtains, it will follow (1) that the very *foundations of geometry are destroyed:* and those great men who have raised that science to so astonishing a height, have been all the while building a castle in the air. [To this it may be *replied*, that whatever is useful in geometry and promotes the benefit of human life, doth still remain firm and unshaken on our principles.] That science, considered as *practical*, will rather receive advantage than any prejudice from what hath been said.

But to set this in a due light, may be the subject of a distinct inquiry. For the rest, though it should follow that some of the more intricate and subtle parts of *speculative mathematics* may be pared off without any prejudice to truth; yet I do not see what damage will be thence derived to mankind. On the contrary, it were highly to be wished, that men of great abilities and obstinate application would draw off their thoughts from those amusements, and employ them in the study of such things as lie nearer the concerns of life, or have a more direct influence on the manners.

CXXXII. *Second objection of mathematicians.—Answer.*—If it be said that several theorems undoubtedly true, are discovered by methods in which *infinitesimals* are made use of, which could never have been, if their existence included a contradiction in it. [I *answer*, that upon a thorough examination it will not be found, that in any instance it is necessary to make use of or conceive infinitesimal parts of finite lines, or even quantities less than the *minimum sensibile:* nay, it will be evident this is never done, it being impossible.]*

CXXXIII. *If the doctrine were only an hypothesis it should be respected for its consequences.*—By what we have premised, it is plain that very numerous and *important errors have taken their rise from those false principles,* which were impugned in the foregoing parts of this treatise. And the opposites of those erroneous tenets at the same time appear to be most fruitful principles, from whence do flow innumerable consequences highly advantageous to true philosophy as well as to religion. Particularly, *matter* or *the absolute existence of corporeal objects,* hath been shown to be that wherein the most avowed and pernicious enemies of all knowledge, whether human or divine, have ever placed their chief strength and confidence. And surely, if by distinguishing the real existence of unthinking things from their being perceived, and allowing them a substance of their own out of the minds of spirits, (1) *no one thing is explained in nature;* but on the contrary a great many inexplicable difficulties arise: if (2) *the supposition of matter is barely precarious,* as not being grounded on so much as one single reason: if (3) *its consequences cannot endure* the *light of examination* and free inquiry, but screen themselves under the dark and general pretence of *infinites being incomprehensible:* if withal (4) the removal of this *matter* be not

* The following passage is added in the edition of 1710:—"And whatever mathematicians may think of *fluxions* or the *differential calculus* and the like, a little reflection will show them, that in working by those methods, they do not conceive or imagine lines or surfaces less than what are perceivable to sense. They may, indeed, call those little and almost insensible quantities *infinitesimals* or *infinitesimals of infinitesimals*, if they please: but at bottom this is all, they being in truth finite, nor does the solution of problems require the supposing any other. But this will be more clearly made out hereafter."

attended with the least evil consequence, if it be not even missed in the world, but every thing as well, nay much easier conceived without it: if lastly, (5) both *sceptics* and *atheists* are for ever silenced upon supposing only spirits and ideas, and this scheme of things is perfectly agreeable both to *reason* and *religion*: methinks we may expect it should be admitted and firmly embraced, though it were proposed only as an *hypothesis*, and the existence of matter had been allowed possible, which yet I think we have evidently demonstrated that it is not.

CXXXIV. True it is, that in consequence of the foregoing principles, several disputes and speculations, which are esteemed no mean parts of learning, are rejected as useless. But how great a prejudice soever against our notions, this may give to those who have already been deeply engaged, and made large advances in studies of that nature: yet by others, we hope it will not be thought any just ground of dislike to the principles and tenets herein laid down, that they abridge the labour of study, and make human sciences more clear, compendious, and attainable, than they were before.

CXXXV. HAVING despatched what we intended to say concerning the knowledge of *ideas*, the method we proposed leads us, in the next place, to treat of *spirits*:* with regard to which, perhaps human knowledge is not so deficient as is vulgarly imagined. [The great reason that is assigned for our being thought ignorant of the nature of spirits, is, our not having an idea of it.] But surely it ought not to be looked on as a defect in a human understanding, that it does not perceive the idea of *spirit*, if it is *manifestly impossible there should be any such idea*. And this, if I mistake not, has been demonstrated in Sect. XXVII.; to which I shall here add [that a spirit has been shown to be the only substance or support, wherein the unthinking beings or ideas can exist: but that this *substance* which supports or perceives ideas should itself be an *idea*, or like an *idea*, is evidently absurd.]

CXXXVI. *Objection.—Answer.*—[It will perhaps be said, that we want a sense† (as some have imagined) proper to know substances withal, which if we had, we might know our own soul, as we do a triangle. To this I *answer*, that in case we had a new sense bestowed upon us, we could only receive thereby *some new sensations or ideas of sense*. But I believe nobody will say, that what he means by the terms *soul* and *substance*, is only some particular sort of idea or sensation.] We may therefore infer, that all things duly considered, it is not more reasonable to think our faculties defective, in that they do not furnish us with an idea of spirit or *active thinking* substance, than it would be if we should blame them for not being able to comprehend a *round square*.

* Vide sect. xxvii. † Vide sect. lxxviii.

CXXXVII. From the opinion (1) that *spirits are to be known after the manner of an idea** or sensation, have risen many absurd and heterodox tenets, and much scepticism about the nature of the soul. [It is even probable, that this opinion may have produced a doubt in some, whether they had any soul at all distinct from their body, since upon inquiry they could not find *they had an idea of it.*] That an *idea*, which is inactive, and the existence whereof consists in being perceived, should be the image or likeness of an agent subsisting by itself, seems no need to other refutation, than barely attending to what is meant by those words. [But perhaps you will say, that though an *idea* cannot resemble a *spirit*, in its thinking, acting, or subsisting by itself, yet it may in some other respects: and it is not necessary that an idea or image be in all respects like the original.]

CXXXVIII. [*I answer*, if it does not in those mentioned, it is impossible it should represent it in any other thing. Do but leave out the power of willing, thinking, and perceiving ideas, and there remains nothing else wherein the idea can be like a spirit.] For by the word *spirit* we mean only that which thinks, wills, and perceives; this, and this alone, constitutes the signification of that term. If, therefore, it is impossible that any degree of those powers should be represented in an idea, it is evident there can be no idea of a spirit.

CXXXIX. [But it will be objected, (2)† that if there is no *idea* signified by the terms *soul*, *spirit*, and *substance*, they are wholly insignificant, or have no meaning in them. I answer, those words do mean or signify a real thing, which is neither an idea nor like an idea, but that which perceives ideas, and wills, and reasons about them.] What I am myself, that which I denote by the term I, is the same with what is meant by *soul* or *spiritual substance*. If it be said that this is only quarrelling at a word, and that since the immediate significations of other names are, by common consent, called *ideas*, no reason can be assigned, why that which is signified by the name *spirit* or *soul*, may not partake in the same appellation. [I answer, all the unthinking objects of the mind agree, in that they are *entirely passive*, and their existence consists only in being perceived: whereas a soul or spirit is an active being, whose existence consists not in being perceived, but *in perceiving ideas* and thinking. It is therefore necessary, *in order to prevent equivocation*, and confounding natures perfectly disagreeing and unlike, that we distinguish between *spirit* and *idea*. See Sect. XXVII.]

CXL. *Our idea of spirit.*—[In a large sense indeed, we may be said to have an idea, or rather a notion of *spirit*, that is, (1) we understand the meaning of the word, otherwise we could not

* Vide sect. cxxxix.

† Vide sect. cxxxvii.

affirm or deny any thing of it. Moreover, (2) as we conceive the ideas that are in the minds of other spirits by means of our own, which we suppose to be *resemblances* of them: so we know other spirits by means of our own soul, which in that sense is the image or idea of them, it having a like respect to other spirits, that blueness or heat by me perceived hath to those ideas perceived by another.]*

CXLI. *The natural immortality of the soul is a necessary consequence of the foregoing doctrine.*†—[It must not be supposed, that they who assert the natural immortality of the soul are of opinion that it is *absolutely incapable of annihilation*, even by the infinite power of the Creator who first gave it being: but only that it is not liable to be broken or dissolved by the *ordinary laws of nature or motion.*] They, indeed, who hold the soul of man to be only a thin vital flame, or system of animal spirits, make it perishing and corruptible as the body, since there is nothing more easily dissipated than such a being, which it is naturally impossible should survive the ruin of the tabernacle wherein it is enclosed. And this notion hath been greedily embraced and cherished by the worst part of mankind, as the most effectual antidote against all impressions of virtue and religion. But it hath been made evident, that bodies, of what frame or texture soever, are barely passive ideas in the mind, which is more distant and heterogeneous from them, than light is from darkness. [We have shown that the soul is indivisible, incorporeal, unextended, and it is consequently *incorruptible.* Nothing can be plainer, than that the motions, changes, decays, and dissolutions, which we hourly see befall natural bodies (and which is what we mean by the *course of nature*), cannot possibly affect an *active, simple, uncompounded* substance: such a being therefore is indissoluble by the force of nature, that is to say, *the soul of man is* naturally *immortal.*]

CXLII. After what hath been said, it is I suppose plain, that *our souls* are *not to be known in the same manner as senseless,* inactive *objects,* or by way of *idea. Spirits* and *ideas* are things so wholly different, that when we say *they exist, they are known,* or the like, these words must not be thought to signify any thing common to both natures. There is nothing alike or common in them: and to expect that by any multiplication or enlargement of our faculties, we may be enabled to know a spirit as we do a triangle, seems as absurd as if we should hope to *see a sound.* This is inculcated because I imagine it may be of moment towards clearing several important questions, and preventing some very dangerous errors concerning the nature of the

* Vide Reid on the Intellectual Powers. Essay ii. ch. x. sect. 13. Edit. 1843.

† "But before we attempt to prove that, it is fit that we explain the meaning of that tenet."—Original edition.

soul. We may not, I think, strictly be said to have an idea of an active being, or of an action, although we may be said to have a notion of them. I have some knowledge or notion of my mind, and its acts about ideas, inasmuch as I know or understand what is meant by those words. What I know, that I have some notion of. I will not say that the terms *idea* and *notion* may not be used convertibly, if the world will have it so. But yet it conduceth to clearness and propriety, that we distinguish things very different by different names. It is also to be remarked, that, all relations including an act of the mind, we cannot so properly be said to have an idea, but rather a notion of the relations or habitudes between things. But if, in the modern way, the word *idea* is extended to spirits, and relations, and acts; this is, after all, an affair of verbal concern.

CXLIII. It will not be amiss to add, that the doctrine of *abstract ideas* hath had no small share in *rendering those sciences intricate* and obscure, *which are* particularly *conversant about spiritual things.* [Men have imagined they could frame abstract notions of the *powers and acts of the mind,* and consider them prescinded, as well from the mind or spirit itself, as from their respective objects and effects.] Hence a great number of dark and ambiguous terms, presumed to stand for abstract notions, have been introduced into metaphysics and morality, and from these have grown infinite distractions and disputes amongst the learned.

CXLIV.* [But nothing seems more to have contributed towards engaging men in controversies and mistakes, with regard to the nature and operations of the mind, *than the being used to speak of those things in terms borrowed from sensible ideas.*] ☞ For example, the will is termed the *motion* of the soul: this infuses a belief, that the mind of man is as a ball in motion, impelled and determined by the objects of sense, as necessarily as that is by the stroke of a racket. Hence arise endless scruples and errors of dangerous consequence in morality. All which, I doubt not, may be cleared, and truth appear plain, uniform, and consistent, could but philosophers be prevailed on to retire into themselves, and attentively consider their own meaning.

CXLV. *Knowledge of spirits not immediate.*—[From what hath been said, it is plain that *we* cannot *know the existence of other spirits* otherwise than *by their operations,* or *the ideas by them excited in us.* I perceive several motions, changes, and combinations of ideas, that inform me there are certain particular agents *like myself,* which accompany them, and concur in their produc-

* We are said to have an idea of spirit because (1) an opinion of spirit may be had in the manner of an idea. Sect. cxl. (2) It has been thought practicable to have an abstract idea of the powers and acts of the mind. Sect. cxliii. (3) These powers are spoken of in terms borrowed from sensible objects. Sect. cxliv.

tion.] [Hence the knowledge I have of other spirits is *not immediate*, as is the knowledge of my ideas; but depending on the intervention of ideas, by me referred to *agents or spirits* distinct from myself, as effects or concomitant signs.]

CXLVI. But though there be some things which convince us human agents are concerned in producing them; yet it is evident to every one, that those things which are called the works of nature, that is, the far greater part of the ideas or sensations perceived by us, are not produced by, or dependent on, the wills of men. There is therefore some other spirit that causes them, since it is repugnant that they should subsist by themselves. See Sect. XXIX. But if we attentively consider the constant regularity, order, and concatenation of natural things, the surprising magnificence, beauty, and perfection of the larger, and the exquisite contrivance of the smaller parts of the creation, together with the exact harmony and correspondence of the whole, but, above all, the never enough admired laws of pain and pleasure, and the instincts or natural inclinations, appetites, and passions of animals; I say if we consider all these things, and at the same time attend to the meaning and import of the attributes, one, eternal, infinitely wise, good, and perfect, we shall clearly perceive that they belong to the aforesaid spirit, *who works all in all*, and *by whom all things consist.*

Common visible world

CXLVII. *The existence of God more evident than that of man.*—Hence it is evident, that God is known as certainly and immediately as any other mind or spirit whatsoever, distinct from ourselves. [We may even assert, that the existence of God is far more evidently perceived than the existence of men; because the effects of nature are infinitely *more numerous and considerable* than those ascribed to human agents.] There is not any one mark that denotes a man, or effect produced by him, which doth not more strongly evince the being of that Spirit who is the *Author of nature.* [For it is evident that in affecting other persons, the will of man hath no other object than barely the *motion of the limbs of his body;* but that such a motion should be attended by, or excite *any idea in the mind of another*, depends wholly on the will of the Creator.] He alone it is who, "upholding all things by the word of his power," maintains that intercourse between spirits, whereby they are able to perceive the existence of each other. And yet this pure and clear light, which enlightens every one, is itself invisible (to the greatest part of mankind.*)

CXLVIII. It seems to be a *general pretence of the unthinking* herd, that *they cannot see God.* Could we but see him, say they, as we see a man, we should believe that he is, and believing

* Orig. Edit.

obey his commands. But, alas, we need only open our eyes to see the sovereign Lord of all things with a more full and clear view, than we do any one of our fellow-creatures. Not that I imagine we see God (as some will have it) by a direct and immediate view, or see corporeal things, not by themselves, but by seeing that which represents them in the essence of God, which doctrine is, I must confess, to me incomprehensible. But I shall explain my meaning. A human spirit or person is not perceived by sense, as not being an idea; when therefore we see the colour, size, figure, and motions of a man, we perceive only certain sensations or ideas excited in our own minds: and these being exhibited to our view in sundry distinct collections, serve to mark out unto us the existence of finite and created spirits like ourselves. [Hence it is plain, we do not see a man, if by *man* is meant that which lives, moves, perceives, and thinks as we do: but only such a certain collection of ideas, as directs us to think there is a distinct principle of thought and motion like to ourselves, accompanying and represented by it.] And after the same manner we see God; all the difference is, that whereas some one finite and narrow assemblage of ideas denotes a particular human mind, whithersoever we direct our view, we do at all times and in all places perceive manifest tokens of the divinity: every thing we see, hear, feel, or anywise perceive by sense, being a sign or effect of the power of God; as is our perception of those very motions which are produced by men.

CXLIX. It is therefore plain, that *nothing can be more evident* to any one that is capable of the least reflection, *than the existence of God*, or a Spirit who is intimately present to our minds, producing in them all that variety of ideas or sensations, which continually affect us, on whom we have an absolute and entire dependence, in short, *in whom we live, and move, and have our being.* That the discovery of this great truth, which lies so near and obvious to the mind, should be attained to by the reason of so very few, is a sad instance of the stupidity and inattention of men, who, though they are surrounded with such clear manifestations of the Deity, are yet so little affected by them, that they seem as it were blinded with excess of light.

CL. *Objection on behalf of nature.—Answer.*—[But you will say, hath nature no share in the production of natural things, and must they be all ascribed to the immediate and sole operation of God? I answer, if by *nature* is meant only the visible *series* of effects, or sensations imprinted on our minds according to certain fixed and general laws: then it is plain, that nature taken in this sense cannot produce any thing at all. But if by *nature* is meant some being distinct from God, as well as from the laws of nature, and things perceived by sense, I must confess that word is to me an empty sound, without any intelligible meaning

annexed to it.] Nature in this acceptation is a vain *chimera*, introduced by those heathens, who had not just notions of the omnipresence and infinite perfection of God. But it is more unaccountable, that it should be received among Christians professing belief in the holy scriptures, which constantly ascribe those effects to the *immediate hand of God*, that heathen philosophers are wont to impute to *nature*. "The Lord, he causeth the vapours to ascend; he maketh lightnings with rain; he bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures," Jer. x. 13. "He turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night," Amos v. 8. "He visiteth the earth, and maketh it soft with showers: he blesseth the springing thereof, and crowneth the year with his goodness; so that the pastures are clothed with flocks, and the valleys are covered over with corn." See Psalm lxv. But notwithstanding that this is the constant language of scripture; yet we have I know not what aversion from believing, that God concerns himself so nearly in our affairs. Fain would we suppose him at a great distance off, and substitute some blind unthinking deputy in his stead, though (if we may believe St. Paul) he be "not far from every one of us."

CLI. *Objection to the hand of God being the immediate cause, threefold.—Answer.*—[It will I doubt not be objected, (1) that the slow and gradual methods observed in the production of natural things, do not seem to have for their cause the *immediate* hand of an *almighty agent*. (2) Besides, monsters, untimely births, fruits blasted in the blossom, rains falling in desert places, (3) miseries incident to human life, are so many arguments that the whole frame of nature is not immediately actuated and superintended by a spirit of infinite wisdom and goodness.] But the answer to this objection is in a good measure plain from Sect. LXII., it being visible, that the aforesaid methods of nature are absolutely necessary, in order to working by the most simple and general rules, and after *a steady and consistent manner;* which argues both the *wisdom* and *goodness* of God.* [Such is the artificial contrivance of this mighty machine of nature, that whilst its motions and various phenomena strike on our senses, the hand which actuates the whole is itself unperceivable to men of flesh and blood. "Verily," saith the prophet, "thou art a God that hidest thyself," Isaiah xlv. 15. But though God conceal himself from the eyes of the sensual and lazy, who will not be at the least expense of thought; yet to an unbiassed and attentive mind, nothing can be more plainly legible, than the intimate presence of an all-wise Spirit, who fashions, regulates, and sus-

* "*(First)* For it doth hence follow, that the finger of God is not so conspicuous to the resolved and careless sinner, which gives him an opportunity to harden in his impiety, and grow ripe for vengeance. Vide sect. lvii."—Edit. 1710.

tains the whole system of being. *(Secondly,)** it is clear from what we have elsewhere observed, that the operating according to general and stated laws, is so necessary *for our guidance in the affairs of life,*] and letting us into the secret of nature, that without it, all reach and compass of thought, all human sagacity and design could serve to no manner of purpose: it were even impossible there should be any such faculties or powers in the mind. See Sect. XXXI. Which one consideration abundantly outbalances whatever particular inconveniences may thence arise.

CLII. [We should *further consider,* (1) that the very blemishes and defects of nature are not without their use, in that they make an agreeable sort of variety, and augment the beauty of the rest of the creation, as shades in a picture serve to set off the brighter and more enlightened parts.] (2) [We would likewise do well to examine, whether our taxing the waste of seeds and embryos, and accidental destruction of plants and animals, before they come to full maturity, as an *imprudence* in the author of nature, be not the effect of *prejudice* contracted by our familiarity with impotent and saving mortals.] In *man* indeed a thrifty management of those things, which *he cannot procure without much pains* and industry, may be esteemed *wisdom.* But we must not imagine, that the inexplicably fine machine of an animal or vegetable costs the great Creator any more pains or trouble in its production than a pebble doth: nothing being more evident, than that an omnipotent spirit can indifferently produce every thing by a mere *fiat* or act of his will. [Hence it is plain, that the splendid profusion of natural things should not be interpreted weakness or prodigality in the agent who produces them, but rather be looked on as an argument of the riches of his power.]

CLIII. As for the *mixture of pain,* or uneasiness which is *in the world,* pursuant to the general laws of nature, and the actions of finite imperfect spirits: this, in the state we are in at present, is indispensably necessary to our well-being. But our prospects are *too narrow:* we take, for instance, the idea of *some one particular pain* into our thoughts, and account it *evil;* whereas if we enlarge our view, so as to comprehend the various ends, connexions, and dependencies of things, on what occasions and in what proportions we are affected with pain and pleasure, the nature of human freedom, and the design with which we are put into the world; [we shall be forced to acknowledge that those particular things, which considered in themselves appear to be *evil,* have the nature of *good,* when considered as *linked with the whole system of beings.*]

CLIV. *Atheism and Manicheism would have few supporters if*

* The first argument is contained in the preceding note.

mankind were in general attentive.—From what hath been said it will be manifest to any considering person, that it is merely for want of attention and comprehensiveness of mind, that there are any favourers of *atheism* or the *Manichean heresy* to be found. Little and unreflecting souls may indeed burlesque the works of Providence, the beauty and order whereof they have not capacity, or will not be at the pains, to comprehend. But those who are masters of any justness and extent of thought, and are withal used to reflect, can never sufficiently admire the divine traces of wisdom and goodness that shine throughout the economy of nature. But what truth is there which shineth so strongly on the mind, that by an aversion of thought, a wilful shutting of the eyes, we may not escape seeing it? Is it therefore to be wondered at, if the generality of men, who are ever intent on business or pleasure, and little used to fix or open the eye of their mind, should not have all that conviction and evidence of the being of God, which might be expected in reasonable creatures?

CLV. We should rather *wonder, that men can be found so stupid as to neglect,* than that neglecting they should be unconvinced of such an evident and momentous truth. And yet it is to be feared that too many of parts and leisure, who live in Christian countries, are merely through a supine and dreadful negligence sunk into a sort of *atheism.* Since it is downright impossible, that a soul pierced and enlightened with a thorough sense of the omnipresence, holiness, and justice of that Almighty Spirit, should persist in a remorseless violation of his laws. We oug t therefore earnestly to meditate and dwell on those important points; that so we may attain conviction without all scruple, that "the eyes of the Lord are in every place beholding the evil and the good;" that he is with us and keepeth us in all places whither we go, and giveth us bread to eat, and raiment to put on; that he is present and conscious to our innermost thoughts; and that we have a most absolute and immediate dependence on him. A clear view of which great truths cannot choose but fill our heart with an awful circumspection and holy fear, which is the strongest incentive to *virtue,* and the best guard against *vice.*

CLVI. For after all, what deserves the first place in our studies, is the consideration of God, and our *duty;* which to promote, as it was the main drift and design of my labours, so shall I esteem them altogether useless and ineffectual if by what I have said I cannot inspire my readers with a pious sense of the presence of God: and having shown the falseness or vanity of those barren speculations, which make the chief employment of learned men, the better dispose them to reverence and embrace the salutary truths of the gospel, which to know and to practise is the highest perfection of human nature.

THREE DIALOGUES

BETWEEN

HYLAS AND PHILONOUS,

IN OPPOSITION TO

SCEPTICS AND ATHEISTS.

THREE DIALOGUES

ETC.

THE FIRST DIALOGUE.

Philonous. GOOD morrow, Hylas: I did not expect to find you abroad so early.

Hylas. It is indeed something unusual: but my thoughts were so taken up with a subject I was discoursing of last night, that finding I could not sleep, I resolved to rise and take a turn in the garden.

Phil. It happened well, to let you see what innocent and agreeable pleasures you lose every morning. Can there be a pleasanter time of the day, or a more delightful season of the year? That purple sky, those wild but sweet notes of birds, the fragrant bloom upon the trees and flowers, the gentle influence of the rising sun, these and a thousand nameless beauties of nature inspire the soul with secret transports; its faculties too being at this time fresh and lively, are fit for these meditations, which the solitude of a garden and tranquillity of the morning naturally dispose us to. But I am afraid I interrupt your thoughts; for you seemed very intent on something.

Hyl. It is true, I was, and shall be obliged to you if you will permit me to go on in the same vein; not that I would by any means deprive myself of your company, for my thoughts always flow more easily in conversation with a friend, than when I am alone: but my request is, that you would suffer me to impart my reflections to you.

Phil. With all my heart, it is what I should have requested myself, if you had not prevented me.

Hyl. I was considering the odd fate of those men who have in all ages, through an affectation of being distinguished from the vulgar, or some unaccountable turn of thought, pretended either to believe nothing at all, or to believe the most extravagant things in the world. This however might be borne, if their paradoxes and scepticism did not draw after them some consequences of general disadvantage to mankind. But the mischief lieth here;

that when men of less leisure see them who are supposed to have spent their whole time in the pursuits of knowledge, professing an entire ignorance of all things, or advancing such notions as are repugnant to plain and commonly received principles, they will be tempted to entertain suspicions concerning the most important truths, which they had hitherto held sacred and unquestionable.

Phil. I entirely agree with you, as to the ill tendency of the affected doubts of some philosophers, and fantastical conceits of others. I am even so far gone of late in this way of thinking, that I have quitted several of the sublime notions I had got in their schools for vulgar opinions. And I give it you on my word, since this revolt from metaphysical notions to the plain dictates of nature and common sense, I find my understanding strangely enlightened, so that I can now easily comprehend a great many things which before were all mystery and riddle.

Hyl. I am glad to find there was nothing in the accounts I heard of you.

Phil. Pray, what were those?

Hyl. You were represented in last night's conversation, as one who maintained the most extravagant opinion that ever entered into the mind of man, to wit, that there is no such thing as *material substance* in the world.

Phil. That there is no such thing as what philosophers call *material substance*, I am seriously persuaded: but if I were made to see any thing absurd or sceptical in this, I should then have the same reason to renounce this, that I imagine I have now to reject the contrary opinion.

Hyl. What! can any thing be more fantastical, more repugnant to common sense, or a more manifest piece of scepticism, than to believe there is no such thing as *matter?*

Phil. Softly, good Hylas. What if it should prove, that you who hold there is, are by virtue of that opinion a greater sceptic, and maintain more paradoxes and repugnancies to common sense, than I who believe no such thing?

Hyl. You may as soon persuade me, the part is greater than the whole, as that, in order to avoid absurdity and scepticism, I should ever be obliged to give up my opinion in this point.

Phil. Well then, are you content to admit that opinion for true, which upon examination shall appear most agreeable to common sense, and remote from scepticism?

Hyl. With all my heart. Since you are for raising disputes about the plainest things in nature, I am content for once to hear what you have to say.

Phil. Pray, Hylas, what do you mean by a *sceptic?*

Hyl. I mean what all men mean, one that doubts of every thing.

Phil. He then who entertains no doubt concerning some particular point, with regard to that point cannot be thought a *sceptic.*

Hyl. I agree with you.

Phil. Whether doth doubting consist in embracing the affirmative or negative side of a question?

Hyl. In neither; for whoever understands English, cannot but know that *doubting* signifies a suspense between both.

Phil. He then that denieth any point, can no more be said to doubt of it than he who affirmeth it with the same degree of assurance.

Hyl. True.

Phil. And consequently, for such his denial is no more to be esteemed a *sceptic* than the other.

Hyl. I acknowledge it.

Phil. How cometh it to pass then, Hylas, that you pronounce me a *sceptic,* because I deny what you affrm, to wit, the existence of matter? Since, for ought you can tell, I am as peremptory in my denial, as you in your affirmation.

Hyl. Hold, Philonous, I have been a little out in my definition; but every false step a man makes in discourse is not to be insisted on. I said, indeed, that a *sceptic* was one who doubted of every thing; but I should have added, or who denies the reality and truth of things.

Phil. What things? Do you mean the principles and theorems of sciences? but these you know are universal intellectual notions, and consequently independent of matter; the denial therefore of this doth not imply the denying them.

Hyl. I grant it. But are there no other things? What think you of distrusting the senses, of denying the real existence of sensible things, or pretending to know nothing of them? Is not this sufficient to denominate a man a *sceptic?*

Phil. Shall we therefore examine which of us it is that denies the reality of sensible things, or professes the greatest ignorance of them; since, if I take you rightly, he is to be esteemed the greatest *sceptic?*

Hyl. That is what I desire.

Phil. What mean you by sensible things?

Hyl. Those things which are perceived by the senses. Can you imagine that I mean any thing else?

Phil. Pardon me, Hylas, if I am desirous clearly to apprehend your notions, since this may much shorten our inquiry. Suffer me then to ask you this further question. Are those things only perceived by the senses which are perceived immediately? or may those things properly be said to be *sensible,* which are perceived mediately, or not without the intervention of others?

Hyl. I do not sufficiently understand you.

Phil. In reading a book, what I immediately perceive are the

letters, but mediately, or by means of these, are suggested to my mind the notions of God, virtue, truth, &c. Now that the letters are truly sensible things, or perceived by sense, there is no doubt: but I would know whether you take the things suggested by them to be so too.

Hyl. No, certainly, it were absurd to think *God* or *virtue* sensible things, though they may be signified and suggested to the mind by sensible marks, with which they have an arbitrary connexion.

Phil. It seems then, that by *sensible things* you mean those only which can be perceived immediately by sense.

Hyl. Right.

Phil. Doth it not follow from this, that though I see one part of the sky red, and another blue, and that my reason doth thence evidently conclude there must be some cause of that diversity of colours, yet that cause cannot be said to be a sensible thing, or perceived by the sense of seeing?

Hyl. It doth.

Phil. In like manner, though I hear variety of sounds, yet I cannot be said to hear the causes of those sounds.

Hyl. You cannot.

Phil. And when by my touch I perceive a thing to be hot and heavy, I cannot say with any truth or propriety, that I feel the cause of its heat or weight.

Hyl. To prevent any more questions of this kind, I tell you once for all, that by *sensible things* I mean those only which are perceived by sense, and that in truth the senses perceive nothing which they do not perceive immediately: for they make no inferences. The deducing therefore of causes or occasions from effects and appearances, which alone are perceived by sense, entirely relates to reason.

Phil. This point then is agreed between us, that *sensible things are those only which are immediately perceived by sense.* You will further inform me, whether we immediately perceive by sight any thing beside light, and colours, and figures: or by hearing any thing but sounds: by the palate, any thing besides tastes: by the smell, besides odours: or by the touch, more than tangible qualities.

Hyl. We do not.

Phil. It seems therefore, that if you take away all sensible qualities, there remains nothing sensible.

Hyl. I grant it.

Phil. Sensible things therefore are nothing else but so many sensible qualities, or combinations of sensible qualities.

Hyl. Nothing else.

Phil. Heat then is a sensible thing.

Hyl. Certainly.

Phil. Doth the reality of sensible things consist in being perceived? or, is it something distinct from their being perceived, and that bears no relation to the mind?

Hyl. To *exist* is one thing, and to be *perceived* is another.

Phil. I speak with regard to sensible things only; and of these I ask, whether by their real existence you mean a subsistence exterior to the mind, and distinct from their being perceived?

Hyl. I mean a real absolute being, distinct from, and without any relation to their being perceived.

Phil. Heat therefore, if it be allowed a real being, must exist without the mind.

Hyl. It must.

Phil. Tell me, Hylas, is this real existence equally compatible to all degrees of heat, which we perceive: or is there any reason why we should attribute it to some, and deny it others? and if there be, pray let me know that reason.

Hyl. Whatever degree of heat we perceive by sense, we may be sure the same exists in the object that occasions it.

Phil. What, the greatest as well as the least?

Hyl. I tell you, the reason is plainly the same in respect of both: they are both perceived by sense; nay, the greater degree of heat is more sensibly perceived; and consequently, if there is any difference, we are more certain of its real existence than we can be of the reality of a lesser degree.

Phil. But is not the most vehement and intense degree of heat a very great pain?

Hyl. No one can deny it.

Phil. And is any unperceiving thing capable of pain or pleasure?

Hyl. No certainly.

Phil. Is your material substance a senseless being, or a being endowed with sense and perception?

Hyl. It is senseless without doubt.

Phil. It cannot therefore be the subject of pain.

Hyl. By no means.

Phil. Nor consequently of the greatest heat perceived by sense, since you acknowledge this to be no small pain.

Hyl. I grant it.

Phil. What shall we say then of your external object; is it a material substance, or no?

Hyl. It is a material substance with the sensible qualities inhering in it.

Phil. How then can a great heat exist in it, since you own it cannot in a material substance? I desire you would clear this point.

Hyl. Hold, Philonous; I fear I was out in yielding intense heat to be a pain. It should seem rather, that pain is something distinct from heat, and the consequence or effect of it.

Phil. Upon putting your hand near the fire, do you perceive one simple uniform sensation, or two distinct sensations?

Hyl. But one simple sensation.

Phil. Is not the heat immediately perceived?

Hyl. It is.

Phil. And the pain?

Hyl. True.

Phil. Seeing therefore they are both immediately perceived at the same time, and the fire affects you only with one simple, or uncompounded idea, it follows that this same simple idea is both the intense heat immediately perceived, and the pain; and consequently, that the intense heat immediately perceived, is nothing distinct from a particular sort of pain.

Hyl. It seems so.

Phil. Again, try in your thoughts, Hylas, if you can conceive a vehement sensation to be without pain, or pleasure.

Hyl. I cannot.

Phil. Or can you frame to yourself an idea of sensible pain or pleasure in general, abstracted from every particular idea of heat, cold, tastes, smells, &c.?

Hyl. I do not find that I can.

Phil. Doth it not therefore follow, that sensible pain is nothing distinct from those sensations or ideas, in an intense degree?

Hyl. It is undeniable; and to speak the truth, I begin to suspect a very great heat cannot exist but in a mind perceiving it.

Phil. What! are you then in that *sceptical* state of suspense, between affirming and denying?

Hyl. I think I may be positive in the point. A very violent and painful heat cannot exist without the mind.

Phil. It hath not therefore, according to you, any real being.

Hyl. I own it.

Phil. Is it therefore certain, that there is no body in nature really hot?

Hyl. I have not denied there is any real heat in bodies. I only say, there is no such thing as an intense real heat.

Phil. But did you not say before, that all degrees of heat were equally real: or if there was any difference, that the greater were more undoubtedly real than the lesser?

Hyl. True: but it was, because I did not then consider the ground there is for distinguishing between them, which I now plainly see. And it is this: because intense heat is nothing else but a particular kind of painful sensation; and pain cannot exist but in a perceiving being; it follows that no intense heat can really exist in an unperceiving corporeal substance. But this is no reason why we should deny heat in an inferior degree to exist in such a substance.

Phil. But how shall we be able to discern those degrees of

heat which exist only in the mind, from those which exist without it?

Hyl. That is no difficult matter. You know, the least pain cannot exist unperceived; whatever therefore degree of heat is a pain, exists only in the mind. But as for all other degrees of heat, nothing obliges us to think the same of them.

Phil. I think you granted before, that no unperceiving being was capable of pleasure, any more than of pain.

Hyl. I did.

Phil. And is not warmth, or a more gentle degree of heat than what causes uneasiness, a pleasure?

Hyl. What then?

Phil. Consequently it cannot exist without the mind in any unperceiving substance, or body.

Hyl. So it seems.

Phil. Since therefore, as well those degrees of heat that are not painful, as those that are, can exist only in a thinking substance; may we not conclude that external bodies are absolutely incapable of any degree of heat whatsoever?

Hyl. On second thoughts, I do not think it so evident that warmth is a pleasure, as that a great degree of heat is a pain.

Phil. I do not pretend that warmth is as great a pleasure as heat is a pain. But if you grant it to be even a small pleasure, it serves to make good my conclusion.

Hyl. I could rather call it an *indolence*. It seems to be nothing more than a privation of both pain and pleasure. And that such a quality or state as this may agree to an unthinking substance, I hope you will not deny.

Phil. If you are resolved to maintain that warmth, or a gentle degree of heat, is no pleasure, I know not how to convince you otherwise, than by appealing to your own sense. But what think you of cold?

Hyl. The same that I do of heat. An intense degree of cold is a pain; for to feel a very great cold, is to perceive a great uneasiness: it cannot therefore exist without the mind; but a lesser degree of cold may, as well as a lesser degree of heat.

Phil. Those bodies therefore, upon whose application to our own we perceive a moderate degree of heat, must be concluded to have a moderate degree of heat or warmth in them: and those, upon whose application we feel a like degree of cold, must be thought to have cold in them.

Hyl. They must.

Phil. Can any doctrine be true that necessarily leads a man into an absurdity?

Hyl. Without doubt it cannot.

Phil. Is it not an absurdity to think that the same thing should be at the same time both cold and warm?

Hyl. It is.

Phil. Suppose now one of your hands hot, and the other cold, and that they are both at once put into the same vessel of water, in an intermediate state; will not the water seem cold to one hand, and warm to the other?

Hyl. It will.

Phil. Ought we not therefore by your principles to conclude, it is really both cold and warm at the same time, that is, according to your own concession, to believe an absurdity?

Hyl. I confess it seems so.

Phil. Consequently, the principles themselves are false, sin e you have granted that no true principle leads to an absurdity.

Hyl. But after all, can any thing be more absurd than to say, *there is no heat in the fire?*

Phil. To make the point still clearer; tell me, whether in two cases exactly alike, we ought not to make the same judgment?

Hyl. We ought.

Phil. When a pin pricks your finger, doth it not rend and divide the fibres of your flesh?

Hyl. It doth.

Phil. And when a coal burns your finger, doth it any more?

Hyl. It doth not.

Phil. Since therefore you neither judge the sensation itself occasioned by the pin, nor any thing like it to be in the pin; you should not, conformably to what you have now granted, judge the sensation occasioned by the fire, or any thing like it, to be in the fire.

Hyl. Well, since it must be so, I am content to yield this point, and acknowledge, that heat and cold are only sensations existing in our minds: but there still remain qualities enough to secure the reality of external things.

Phil. But what will you say, Hylas, if it shall appear that the case is the same with regard to all other sensible qualities, and that they can no more be supposed to exist without the mind, than heat and cold?

Hyl. Then indeed you will have done something to the purpose; but that is what I despair of seeing proved.

Phil. Let us examine them in order. What think you of tastes, do they exist without the mind, or no?

Hyl. Can any man in his senses doubt whether sugar is sweet, or wormwood bitter?

Phil, Inform me, Hylas. Is a sweet taste a particular kind of pleasure or pleasant sensation, or is it not?

Hyl. It is.

Phil. And is not bitterness some kind of uneasiness or pain?

Hyl. I grant it.

Phil. If therefore sugar and wormwood are unthinking corpo-

real substances existing without the mind, how can sweetness and bitterness, that is, pleasure and pain, agree to them?

Hyl. Hold, Philonous; I now see what it was deluded me all this time. You asked whether heat and cold, sweetness and bitterness, were not particular sorts of pleasure and pain; to which I answered simply, that they were. Whereas I should have thus distinguished: those qualities, as perceived by us, are pleasures or pains, but not as existing in the external objects. We must not therefore conclude absolutely, that there is no heat in the fire, or sweetness in the sugar, but only that heat or sweetness, as perceived by us, are not in the fire or sugar. What say you to this?

Phil. I say it is nothing to the purpose. Our discourse proceeded altogether concerning sensible things, which you defined to be the things we *immediately perceive by our senses.* Whatever other qualities therefore you speak of, as distinct from these, I know nothing of them, neither do they at all belong to the point in dispute. You may indeed pretend to have discovered certain qualities which you do not perceive, and assert those insensible qualities exist in fire and sugar. But what use can be made of this to your present purpose, I am at a loss to conceive. Tell me then once more, do you acknowledge that heat and cold, sweetness and bitterness (meaning those qualities which are perceived by the senses), do not exist without the mind?

Hyl. I see it is to no purpose to hold out, so I give up the cause as to those mentioned qualities. Though I profess it sounds oddly, to say that sugar is not sweet.

Phil. But for your further satisfaction, take this along with you: that which at other times seems sweet, shall to a distempered palate appear bitter. And nothing can be plainer, than that divers persons perceive different tastes in the same food, since that which one man delights in, another abhors. And how could this be, if the taste was something really inherent in the food?

Hyl. I acknowledge I know not how.

Phil. In the next place, odours are to be considered. And with regard to these, I would fain know, whether what hath been said of tastes doth not exactly agree to them? Are they not so many pleasing or displeasing sensations?

Hyl. They are.

Phil. Can you then conceive it possible that they should exist in an unperceiving thing?

Hyl. I cannot.

Phil. Or can you imagine, that filth and ordure affect those brute animals that feed on them out of choice, with the same smells which we perceive in them?

Hyl. By no means.

Phil. May we not therefore conclude of smells, as of the other forementioned qualities, that they cannot exist in any but a perceiving substance or mind?

Hyl. I think so.

Phil. Then as to sounds, what must we think of them: are they accidents really inherent in external bodies, or not?

Hyl. That they inhere not in the sonorous bodies, is plain from hence; because a bell struck in the exhausted receiver of an air-pump, sends forth no sound. The air therefore must be thought the subject of sound.

Phil. What reason is there for that, Hylas?

Hyl. Because when any motion is raised in the air, we perceive a sound greater or lesser, in proportion to the air's motion; but without some motion in the air, we never hear any sound at all.

Phil. And granting that we never hear a sound but when some motion is produced in the air, yet I do not see how you can infer from thence, that the sound itself is in the air.

Hyl. It is this very motion in the external air, that produces in the mind the sensation of *sound*. For striking on the drum of the ear, it causeth a vibration, which by the auditory nerves being communicated to the brain, the soul is thereupon affected with the sensation called *sound*.

Phil. What! is sound then a sensation?

Hyl. I tell you, as perceived by us, it is a particular sensation in the mind.

Phil. And can any sensation exist without the mind?

Hyl. No, certainly.

Phil. How then can sound, being a sensation, exist in the air, if by the *air* you mean a senseless substance existing without the mind.

Hyl. You must distinguish, Philonous, between sound, as it is perceived by us, and as it is in itself; or, (which is the same thing) between the sound we immediately perceive, and that which exists without us. The former indeed is a particular kind of sensation, but the latter is merely a vibrative or undulatory motion in the air.

Phil. I thought I had already obviated that distinction by the answer I gave when you were applying it in a like case before. But to say no more of that; are you sure then that sound is really nothing but motion?

Hyl. I am.

Phil. Whatever therefore agrees to real sound, may with truth be attributed to motion.

Hyl. It may.

Phil. It is then good sense to speak of *motion*, as of a thing that is *loud*, *sweet*, *acute*, or *grave*.

Hyl. I see you are resolved not to understand me. Is it not evident, those accidents or modes belong only to sensible sound, or *sound* in the common acceptation of the word, but not to *sound* in the real and philosophic sense, which, as I just now told you, is nothing but a certain motion of the air?

Phil. It seems then there are two sorts of sound, the one vulgar, or that which is heard, the other philosophical and real.

Hyl. Even so.

Phil. And the latter consists in motion.

Hyl. I told you so before.

Phil. Tell me, Hylas, to which of the senses, think you, the idea of motion belongs: to the hearing?

Hyl. No, certainly, but to the sight and touch.

Phil. It should follow then, that according to you, real sounds may possibly be *seen* or *felt*, but never *heard*.

Hyl. Look you, Philonous, you may if you please make a jest of my opinion, but that will not alter the truth of things. I own, indeed, the inferences you draw me into sound something oddly: but common language, you know, is framed by, and for the use of the vulgar: we must not therefore wonder, if expressions adapted to exact philosophic notions, seem uncouth and out of the way.

Phil. Is it come to that? I assure you, I imagine myself to have gained no small point, since you make so light of departing from common phrases and opinions; it being a main part of our inquiry, to examine whose notions are widest of the common road, and most repugnant to the general sense of the world. But can you think it no more than a philosophical paradox, to say that *real sounds are never heard*, and that the idea of them is obtained by some other sense. And is there nothing in this contrary to nature and the truth of things?

Hyl. To deal ingenuously, I do not like it. And after the concessions already made, I had as well grant that sounds too have no real being without the mind.

Phil. And I hope you will make no difficulty to acknowledge the same of colours.

Hyl. Pardon me; the case of colours is very different. Can any thing be plainer, than that we see them on the objects?

Phil. The objects you speak of are, I suppose, corporeal substances existing without the mind.

Hyl. They are.

Phil. And have true and real colours inhering in them?

Hyl. Each visible object hath that colour which we see in it.

Phil. How! is there any thing visible but what we perceive by sight.

Hyl. There is not.

Phil. And do we perceive any thing by sense, which we do not perceive immediately?

Hyl. How often must I be obliged to repeat the same thing? I tell you, we do not.

Phil. Have patience, good Hylas; and tell me once more whether there is any thing immediately perceived by the senses, except sensible qualities. I know you asserted there was not: but I would now be informed, whether you still persist in the same opinion.

Hyl. I do.

Phil. Pray, is your corporeal substance either a sensible quality or made up of sensible qualities?

Hyl. What a question that is! who ever thought it was?

Phil. My reason for asking was, because in saying, *each visible object hath that colour which we see in it*, you make visible objects to be corporeal substances; which implies either that corporeal substances are sensible qualities, or else that there is something beside sensible qualities perceived by sight: but as this point was formerly agreed between us, and is still maintained by you, it is a clear consequence, that your corporeal substance is nothing distinct from sensible qualities.

Hyl. You may draw as many absurd consequences as you please, and endeavour to perplex the plainest things; but you shall never persuade me out of my senses. I clearly understand my own meaning.

Phil. I wish you would make me understand it too. But since you are unwilling to have your notion of corporeal substance examined, I shall urge that point no further. Only be pleased to let me know, whether the same colours which we see, exist in external bodies, or some other.

Hyl. The very same.

Phil. What! are then the beautiful red and purple we see on yonder clouds, really in them? Or do you imagine they have in themselves any other form than that of a dark mist or vapour?

Hyl. I must own, Philonous, those colours are not really in the clouds as they seem to be at this distance. They are only apparent colours.

Phil. *Apparent* call you them? how shall we distinguish these apparent colours from real?

Hyl. Very easily. Those are to be thought apparent, which, appearing only at a distance, vanish upon a nearer approach.

Phil. And those I suppose are to be thought real, which are discovered by the most near and exact survey.

Hyl. Right.

Phil. Is the nearest and exactest survey made by the help of a microscope, or by the naked eye?

Hyl. By a microscope, doubtless.

Phil. But a microscope often discovers colours in an object different from those perceived by the unassisted sight. And in case we had microscopes magnifying to any assigned degree; it is certain, that no object whatsoever viewed through them, would appear in the same colour which it exhibits to the naked eye.

Hyl. And what will you conclude from all this? You cannot argue that there are really and naturally no colours on objects; because by artificial managements they may be altered, or made to vanish.

Phil. I think it may evidently be concluded from your own concessions, that all the colours we see with our naked eyes, are only apparent as those on the clouds, since they vanish upon a more close and accurate inspection, which is afforded us by a microscope. Then as to what you say by way of prevention; I ask you, whether the real and natural state of an object is better discovered by a very sharp and piercing sight, or by one which is less sharp.

Hyl. By the former without doubt.

Phil. Is it not plain from *dioptrics*, that microscopes make the sight more penetrating, and represent objects as they would appear to the eye, in case it were naturally endowed with a most exquisite sharpness?

Hyl. It is.

Phil. Consequently the microscopical representation is to be thought that which best sets forth the real nature of the thing, or what it is in itself. The colours therefore by it perceived, are more genuine and real, than those perceived otherwise.

Hyl. I confess there is something in what you say.

Phil. Besides, it is not only possible but manifest, that there actually are animals, whose eyes are by nature framed to perceive those things, which by reason of their minuteness escape our sight. What think you of those inconceivably small animals perceived by glasses? must we suppose they are all stark blind? Or, in case they see, can it be imagined their sight hath not the same use in preserving their bodies from injuries, which appears in that of all other animals? And if it hath, is it not evident, they must see particles less than their own bodies, which will present them with a far different view in each object, from that which strikes our senses? Even our own eyes do not always represent objects to us after the same manner. In the *jaundice*, every one knows that all things seem yellow. Is it not therefore highly probable, those animals in whose eyes we discern a very different texture from that of ours, and whose bodies abound with different humours, do not see the same colours in every object that we do? From all of which, should it not seem to follow that all colours are equally apparent, and that none of those which we perceive are really inherent in any outward object?

Hyl. It should.

Phil. The point will be past all doubt, if you consider, that in case colours were real properties or affections inherent in external bodies, they could admit of no alteration, without some change wrought in the very bodies themselves: but is it not evident from what hath been said, that upon the use of microscopes, upon a change happening in the humours of the eye, or a variation of distance, without any manner of real alteration in the thing itself, the colours of any object are either changed, or totally disappear? Nay, all other circumstances remaining the same, change but the situation of some objects, and they shall present different colours to the eye. The same thing happens upon viewing an object in various degrees of light. And what is more known, than that the same bodies appear differently coloured by candle-light from what they do in the open day? Add to these the experiment of a prism, which, separating the heterogeneous rays of light, alters the colour of any object; and will cause the whitest to appear of a deep blue or red to the naked eye. And now tell me, whether you are still of opinion, that every body hath its true, real colour inhering in it; and if you think it hath, I would fain know further from you, what certain distance and position of the object, what peculiar texture and formation of the eye, what degree or kind of light is necessary for ascertaining that true colour, and distinguishing it from apparent ones.

Hyl. I own myself entirely satisfied, that they are all equally apparent; and that there is no such thing as colour really inhering in external bodies, but that it is altogether in the light. And what confirms me in this opinion, is, that in proportion to the light, colours are still more or less vivid; and if there be no light, then are there no colours perceived. Besides, allowing there are colours on external objects, yet how is it possible for us to perceive them? For no external body affects the mind, unless it act first on our organs of sense. But the only action of bodies is motion; and motion cannot be communicated otherwise than by impulse. A distant object therefore cannot act on the eye, nor consequently make itself or its properties perceivable to the soul. Whence it plainly follows, that it is immediately some contiguous substance, which operating on the eye occasions a perception of colours: and such is light.

Phil. How! is light then a substance?

Hyl. I tell you, Philonous, external light is nothing but a thin fluid substance, whose minute particles being agitated with a brisk motion, and in various manners reflected from the different surfaces of outward objects to the eyes, communicate different motions to the optic nerves; which being propagated to the brain, cause therein various impressions: and these are attended with the sensations of red, blue, yellow, &c.

Phil. It seems, then, the light doth no more than shake the optic nerves.

Hyl. Nothing else.

Phil. And consequent to each particular motion of the nerves the mind is affected with a sensation, which is some particular colour.

Hyl. Right.

Phil. And these sensations have no existence without the mind.

Hyl. They have not.

Phil. How then do you affirm that colours are in the light, since by *light* you understand a corporeal substance external to the mind?

Hyl. Light and colours, as immediately perceived by us, I grant cannot exist without the mind. But in themselves they are only the motions and configurations of certain insensible particles of matter.

Phil. Colours then, in the vulgar sense, or taken for the immediate objects of sight, cannot agree to any but a perceiving substance.

Hyl. That is what I say.

Phil. Well then, since you give up the point as to those sensible qualities, which are alone thought colours by all mankind beside, you may hold what you please with regard to those invisibles ones of the philosophers. It is not my business to dispute about them; only I would advise you to bethink yourself, whether, considering the inquiry we are upon, it be prudent for you to affirm *the red and blue which we see are not real colours, but certain unknown motions and figures which no man ever did or can see, are truly so.* Are not these shocking notions, and are not they subject to as many ridiculous inferences, as those you were obliged to renounce before in the case of sounds?

Hyl. I frankly own, Philonous, that it is in vain to stand out any longer. Colours, sounds, tastes, in a word, all those termed *secondary qualities*, have certainly no existence without the mind. But by this acknowledgment I must not be supposed to derogate any thing from the reality of matter or external objects, seeing it is no more than several philosophers maintain, who nevertheless are the furthest imaginable from denying matter. For the clearer understanding of this, you must know sensible qualities are by philosophers divided into *primary* and *secondary*. The former are extension, figure, solidity, gravity, motion, and rest. And these they hold exist really in bodies. The latter are those above enumerated; or briefly, all sensible qualities beside the primary, which they assert are only so many sensations or ideas existing no where but in the mind. But all this, I doubt not, you are already apprised of. For my part, I have been a long

time sensible there was such an opinion current among philosophers, but was never thoroughly convinced of its truth till now.

Phil. You are still then of opinion, that extension and figures are inherent in external unthinking substances.

Hyl. I am.

Phil. But what if the same arguments which are brought against secondary qualities, will hold proof against these also?

Hyl. Why then I shall be obliged to think, they too exist only in the mind.

Phil. Is it your opinion, the very figure and extension which you perceive by sense, exist in the outward object or material substance?

Hyl. It is.

Phil. Have all other animals as good grounds to think the same of the figure and extension which they see and feel?

Hyl. Without doubt, if they have any thought at all.

Phil. Answer me, Hylas. Think you the senses were bestowed upon all animals for their preservation and well-being in life? or were they given to men alone for this end?

Hyl. I make no question but they have the same use in all other animals.

Phil. If so, is it not necessary they should be enabled by them to perceive their own limbs, and those bodies which are capable of harming them?

Hyl. Certainly.

Phil. A mite therefore must be supposed to see his own foot, and things equal or even less than it, as bodies of some considerable dimension; though at the same time they appear to you scarce discernible, or at best as so many visible points.

Hyl. I cannot deny it.

Phil. And to creatures less than the mite they will seem yet larger.

Hyl. They will.

Phil. Insomuch that what you can hardly discern, will to another extremely minute animal appear as some huge mountain.

Hyl. All this I grant.

Phil. Can one and the same thing be at the same time in itself of different dimensions?

Hyl. That were absurd to imagine.

Phil. But from what you have laid down it follows, that both the extension by you perceived, and that perceived by the mite itself, as likewise all those perceived by lesser animals, are each of them the true extension of the mite's foot, that is to say, by your own principles you are led into an absurdity.

Hyl. There seems to be some difficulty in the point.

Phil. Again, have you not acknowledged that no real inherent property of any object can be changed, without some change in the thing itself?

Hyl. I have.

Phil. But as we approach to or recede from an object, the visible extension varies, being at one distance ten or a hundred times greater than at another. Doth it not therefore follow from hence likewise, that it is not really inherent in the object?

Hyl. I own I am at a loss what to think.

Phil. Your judgment will soon be determined, if you will venture to think as freely concerning this quality, as you have done concerning the rest. Was it not admitted as a good argument, that neither heat nor cold was in the water, because it seemed warm to one hand, and cold to the other?

Hyl. It was.

Phil. Is it not the very same reasoning to conclude, there is no extension or figure in an object, because to one eye it shall seem little, smooth, and round, when at the same time it appears to the other, great, uneven, and angular?

Hyl. The very same. But doth this latter fact ever happen?

Phil. You may at any time make the experiment, by looking with one eye bare, and with the other through a microscope.

Hyl. I know not how to maintain it, and yet I am loath to give up *extension*, I see so many odd consequences following upon such a concession.

Phil. Odd, say you? After the concessions already made, I hope you will stick at nothing for its oddness. But on the other hand should it not seem very odd, if the general reasoning which includes all other sensible qualities did not also include extension? If it be allowed that no idea nor any thing like an idea can exist in an unperceiving substance, then surely it follows, that no figure or mode of extension, which we can either perceive or imagine, or have any idea of, can be really inherent in matter; not to mention the peculiar difficulty there must be, in conceiving a material substance, prior to and distinct from extension, to be the *substratum* of extension. Be the sensible quality what it will, figure, or sound, or colour; it seems alike impossible it should subsist in that which doth not perceive it.

Hyl. I give up the point for the present, reserving still a right to retract my opinion, in case I shall hereafter discover any false step in my progress to it.

Phil. That is a right you cannot be denied. Figures and extension being despatched, we proceed next to *motion*. Can a real motion in any external body be at the same time both very swift and very slow?

Hyl. It cannot.

Phil. Is not the motion of a body swift in a reciprocal proportion to the time it takes up in describing any given space? Thus a body that describes a mile in an hour, moves three times faster than it would in case it described only a mile in three hours.

Hyl. I agree with you.

Phil. And is not time measured by the succession of ideas in our minds?

Hyl. It is.

Phil. And is it not possible ideas should succeed one another twice as fast in your mind, as they do in mine, or in that of some spirit of another kind.

Hyl. I own it.

Phil. Consequently the same body may to another seem to perform its motion over any space in half the time that it doth to you. And the same reasoning will hold as to any other proportion: that is to say, according to your principles (since the motions perceived are both really in the object) it is possible one and the same body shall be really moved the same way at once, both very swift and very slow. How is this consistent either with common sense, or with what you just now granted?

Hyl. I have nothing to say to it.

Phil. Then as for *solidity:* either you do not mean any sensible quality by that word, and so it is beside our inquiry: or if you do, it must be either hardness or resistance. But both the one and the other are plainly relative to our senses: it being evident, that what seems hard to one animal, may appear soft to another, who hath greater force and firmness of limbs. Nor is it less plain, that the resistance I feel is not in the body.

Hyl. I own the very sensation of resistance, which is all you immediately perceive, is not in the *body*, but the cause of that sensation is.

Phil. But the causes of our sensations are not things immediately perceived, and therefore not sensible. This point I thought had been already determined.

Hyl. I own it was; but you will pardon me if I seem a little embarrassed: I know not how to quit my old notions.

Phil. To help you out, do but consider, that if extension be once acknowledged to have no existence without the mind, the same must necessarily be granted of motion, solidity, and gravity, since they all evidently suppose extension. It is therefore superfluous to inquire particularly concerning each of them. In denying extension, you have denied them all to have any real existence.

Hyl. I wonder, Philonous, if what you say be true, why those philosophers who deny the secondary qualities any real existence, should yet attribute it to the primary. If there is no difference between them, how can this be accounted for?

Phil. It is not my business to account for every opinion of the philosophers. But among other reasons which may be assigned for this, it seems probable, that pleasure and pain being rather annexed to the former than the latter, may be one. Heat and cold, tastes and smells, have something more vividly pleasing or

disagreeable than the ideas of extension, figure, and motion, affect us with. And it being too visibly absurd to hold, that pain or pleasure can be in an unperceiving substance, men are more easily weaned from believing the external existence of the secondary, than the primary qualities. You will be satisfied there is something in this, if you recollect the difference you made between an intense and more moderate degree of heat, allowing the one a real existence, while you denied it to the other. But after all, there is no rational ground for that distinction; for surely an indifferent sensation is as truly *a sensation*, as one more pleasing or painful; and consequently should not any more than they be supposed to exist in an unthinking subject.

Hyl. It is just come into my head, Philonous, that I have somewhere heard of a distinction between absolute and sensible extension. Now though it be acknowledged that *great* and *small*, consisting merely in the relation which other extended beings have to the parts of our own bodies, do not really inhere in the substances themselves; yet nothing obliges us to hold the same with regard to *absolute extension*, which is something abstracted from *great* and *small*, from this or that particular magnitude or figure. So likewise as to motion, *swift* and *slow* are altogether relative to the succession of ideas in our own minds. But it doth not follow, because those modifications of motion exist not without the mind, that therefore absolute motion abstracted from them doth not.

Phil. Pray what is it that distinguishes one motion, or one part of extension from another? Is it not something sensible, as some degree of swiftness or slowness, some certain magnitude or figure peculiar to each?

Hyl. I think so.

Phil. These qualities therefore, stripped of all sensible properties, are without all specific and numerical differences, as the schools call them.

Hyl. They are.

Phil. That is to say, they are extension in general, and motion in general.

Hyl. Let it be so.

Phil. But it is a universally received maxim, that *every thing which exists is particular*. How then can motion in general, or extension in general, exist in any corporeal substance?

Hyl. I will take time to solve your difficulty.

Phil. But I think the point may be speedily decided. Without doubt you can tell, whether you are able to frame this or that idea. Now I am content to put our dispute on this issue. If you can frame in your thoughts a distinct abstract idea of motion or extension, divested of all those sensible modes, as swift and slow, great and small, round and square, and the like, which

are acknowledged to exist only in the mind, I will then yield the point you contend for. But if you cannot, it will be unreasonable on your side to insist any longer upon what you have no notion of.

Hyl. To confess ingenuously, I cannot.

Phil. Can you even separate the ideas of extension and motion, from the ideas of all those qualities which they who make the distinction term *secondary*?

Hyl. What! is it not an easy matter, to consider extension and motion by themselves, abstracted from all other sensible qualities? Pray how do the mathematicians treat of them?

Phil. I acknowledge, Hylas, it is not difficult to form general propositions and reasonings about those qualities, without mentioning any other; and in this sense to consider or treat of them abstractedly. But how doth it follow that because I can pronounce the word *motion* by itself, I can form the idea of it in my mind exclusive of body? Or because theorems may be made of extension and figures, without any mention of *great* or *small*, or any other sensible mode or quality; that therefore it is possible such an abstract idea of extension, without any particular size or figure, or sensible quality, should be distinctly formed, and apprehended by the mind? Mathematicians treat of quantity, without regarding what other sensible qualities it is attended with, as being altogether indifferent to their demonstrations. But when laying aside the words, they contemplate the bare ideas, I believe you will find, they are not the pure abstracted ideas of extension.

Hyl. But what say you to *pure intellect?* May not abstracted ideas be framed by that faculty?

Phil. Since I cannot frame abstract ideas at all, it is plain, I cannot frame them by the help of *pure intellect*, whatsoever faculty you understand by those words. Besides—not to inquire into the nature of pure intellect and its spiritual objects, as *virtue—reason, God*, or the like, thus much seems manifest, that sensible things are only to be perceived by sense, or represented by the imagination. Figures therefore and extension, being originally perceived by sense, do not belong to pure intellect. But for your further satisfaction, try if you can frame the idea of any figure, abstracted from all particularities of size, or even from other sensible qualities.

Hyl. Let me think a little——I do not find that I can.

Phil. And can you think it possible, that should really exist in nature, which implies a repugnancy in its conception?

Hyl. By no means.

Phil. Since therefore it is impossible even for the mind to disunite the ideas of extension and motion from all other sensible qualities, doth it not follow, that where the one exist, there necessarily the other exist likewise?

Hyl. It should seem so.

Phil. Consequently the very same arguments which you admitted, as conclusive against the secondary qualities, are without any further application of force against the primary too. Besides, if you will trust your senses, is it not plain all sensible qualities co-exist, or to them appear as being in the same place? Do they ever represent a motion, or figure, as being divested of all other visible and tangible qualities?

Hyl. You need say no more on this head. I am free to own, if there be no secret error or oversight in our proceedings hitherto, that all sensible qualities are alike to be denied existence without the mind. But my fear is, that I have been too liberal in my former concessions, or overlooked some fallacy or other. In short, I did not take time to think.

Phil. For that matter, Hylas, you may take what time you please in reviewing the progress of our inquiry. You are at liberty to recover any slips you might have made, or offer whatever you have omitted, which makes for your first opinion.

Hyl. One great oversight I take to be this: that I did not sufficiently distinguish the *object* from the *sensation*. Now though this latter may not exist without the mind, yet it will not thence follow that the former cannot.

Phil. What object do you mean? The object of the senses?

Hyl. The same.

Phil. It is then immediately perceived?

Hyl. Right.

Phil. Make me to understand the difference between what is immediately perceived, and a sensation.

Hyl. The sensation I take to be an act of the mind perceiving; beside which, there is something perceived; and this I call the *object*. For example, there is red and yellow on that tulip. But then the act of perceiving those colours is in me only, and not in the tulip.

Phil. What tulip do you speak of? is it that which you see?

Hyl. The same.

Phil. And what do you see beside colour, figure, and extension?

Hyl. Nothing.

Phil. What you would say then is, that the red and yellow are co-existent with the extension; is it not?

Hyl. That is not all: I would say, they have a real existence without the mind, in some unthinking substance.

Phil. That the colours are really in the tulip which I see, is manifest. Neither can it be denied, that this tulip may exist independent of your mind or mine; but that any immediate object of the senses, that is, any idea, or combination of ideas, should exist in an unthinking substance, or exterior to all minds,

is in itself an evident contradiction. Nor can I imagine how this follows from what you said just now, to wit that the red and yellow were on the tulip *you saw*, since you do not pretend to *see* that unthinking substance.

Hyl. You have an artful way, Philonous, of diverting our inquiry from the subject.

Phil. I see you have no mind to be pressed that way. To return then to your distinction between *sensation* and *object*; if I take you right, you distinguish in every perception two things, the one an action of the mind, the other not.

Hyl. True.

Phil. And this action cannot exist in, or belong to any unthinking thing; but whatever beside is implied in a perception, may.

Hyl. That is my meaning.

Phil. So that if there was a perception without any act of the mind, it were possible such a perception should exist in an unthinking substance.

Hyl. I grant it. But it is impossible there should be such a perception.

Phil. When is the mind said to be active?

Hyl. When it produces, puts an end to, or changes any thing.

Phil. Can the mind produce, discontinue, or change any thing but by an act of the will?

Hyl. It cannot.

Phil. The mind therefore is to be accounted active in its perceptions, so far forth as volition is included in them.

Hyl. It is.

Phil. In plucking this flower, I am active, because I do it by the motion of my hand, which was consequent upon my volition; so likewise in applying it to my nose. But is either of these smelling?

Hyl. No.

Phil. I act too in drawing the air through my nose; because my breathing so rather than otherwise, is the effect of my volition. But neither can this be called *smelling*: for if it were, I should smell every time I breathed in that manner.

Hyl. True.

Phil. Smelling then is somewhat consequent to all this.

Hyl. It is.

Phil. But I do not find my will concerned any further. Whatever more there is, as that I perceive such a particular smell or any smell at all, this is independent of my will, and therein I am altogether passive. Do you find it otherwise with you, Hylas?

Hyl. No, the very same.

Phil. Then as to seeing, is it not in your power to open your eyes, or keep them shut; to turn them this or that way?

Hyl. Without doubt.

Phil. But doth it in like manner depend on your will, that in looking on this flower, you perceive *white* rather than any other colour? Or directing your open eyes towards yonder part of the heaven, can you avoid seeing the sun? Or is light or darkness the effect of your volition?

Hyl. No, certainly.

Phil. You are then in these respects altogether passive.

Hyl. I am.

Phil. Tell me now, whether *seeing* consists in perceiving light and colours, or in opening and turning the eyes?

Hyl. Without doubt, in the former.

Phil. Since therefore you are in the very perception of light and colours altogether passive, what is become of that action you were speaking of, as an ingredient in every sensation? And doth it not follow from your own concessions, that the perception of light and colours, including no action in it, may exist in an unperceiving substance? And is not this a plain contradiction?

Hyl. I know not what to think of it.

Phil. Besides, since you distinguish the *active* and *passive* in every perception, you must do it in that of pain. But how is it possible that pain, be it as little active as you please, should exist in an unperceiving substance? In short, do but consider the point, and then confess ingenuously, whether light and colours, tastes, sounds, &c., are not all equally passions or sensations in the soul. You may indeed call them *external objects*, and give them in words what subsistence you please. But examine your own thoughts, and then tell me whether it be not as I say?

Hyl. I acknowledge, Philonous, that upon a fair observation of what passes in my mind, I can discover nothing else, but that I am a thinking being, affected with variety of sensations; neither is it possible to conceive how a sensation should exist in an unperceiving substance. But then on the other hand, when I look on sensible things in a different view, considering them as so many modes and qualities, I find it necessary to suppose a material *substratum*, without which they cannot be conceived to exist.

Phil. Material substratum call you it? Pray, by which of your senses came you acquainted with that being?

Hyl. It is not itself sensible; its modes and qualities only being perceived by the senses.

Phil. I presume then, it was by reflection and reason you obtained the idea of it.

Hyl. I do not pretend to any proper positive idea of it. However I conclude it exists, because qualities cannot be conceived to exist without a support.

Phil. It seems then you have only a relative notion of it, or that you conceive it not otherwise than by conceiving the relation it bears to sensible qualities.

Hyl. Right.

Phil. Be pleased therefore to let me know wherein that relation consists.

Hyl. Is it not sufficiently expressed in the term *substratum*, or *substance?*

Phil. If so, the word *substratum* should import, that it is spread under the sensible qualities or accidents.

Hyl. True.

Phil. And consequently under extension.

Hyl. I own it.

Phil. It is therefore somewhat in its own nature entirely distinct from extension.

Hyl. I tell you, extension is only a mode, and matter is something that supports modes. And is it not evident the thing supported is different from the thing supporting?

Phil. So that something distinct from, and exclusive of extension, is supposed to be the *substratum* of extension.

Hyl. Just so.

Phil. Answer me, Hylas. Can a thing be spread without extension? or is not the idea of extension necessarily included in *spreading?*

Hyl. It is.

Phil. Whatsoever therefore you suppose spread under any thing, must have in itself an extension distinct from the extension of that thing under which it is spread.

Hyl. It must.

Phil. Consequently every corporeal substance being the *substratum* of extension, must have in itself another extension by which it is qualified to be a *substratum:* and so on to infinity. And I ask whether this be not absurd in itself, and repugnant to what you granted just now, to wit, that the *substratum* was something distinct from, and exclusive of extension.

Hyl. Aye but Philonous, you take me wrong. I do not mean that matter is *spread* in a gross literal sense under extension. The word *substratum* is used only to express in general the same thing with *substance.*

Phil. Well then, let us examine the relation implied in the term *substance.* Is it not that it stands under accidents?

Hyl. The very same.

Phil. But that one thing may stand under or support another, must it not be extended?

Hyl. It must.

Phil. Is not therefore this supposition liable to the same absurdity with the former?

Hyl. You still take things in a strict literal sense: that is not fair, Philonous.

Phil. I am not for imposing any sense on your words: you

are at liberty to explain them as you please. Only I beseech you, make me understand something by them. You tell me, matter supports or stands under accidents. How! is it as your legs support your body?

Hyl. No; that is the literal sense.

Phil. Pray let me know any sense, literal or not literal, that you understand it in.——How long must I wait for an answer, Hylas?

Hyl. I declare I know not what to say. I once thought I understood well enough what was meant by matter's supporting accidents. But now the more I think on it, the less can I comprehend it; in short, I find that I know nothing of it.

Phil. It seems then you have no idea at all, neither relative nor positive, of matter; you know neither what it is in itself, nor what relation it bears to accidents.

Hyl. I acknowledge it.

Phil. And yet you asserted, that you could not conceive how qualities or accidents should really exist, without conceiving at the same time a material support of them.

Hyl. I did.

Phil. That is to say, when you conceive the real existence of qualities, you do withal conceive something which you cannot conceive.

Hyl. It was wrong, I own. But still I fear there is some fallacy or other. Pray what think you of this? It is just come into my head, that the ground of all our mistake lies in your treating of each quality by itself. Now, I grant that each quality cannot singly subsist without the mind. Colour cannot without extension, neither can figure without some other sensible quality. But as the several qualities united or blended together form entire sensible things, nothing hinders why such things may not be supposed to exist without the mind.

Phil. Either, Hylas, you are jesting, or have a very bad memory. Though indeed we went through all the qualities by name one after another; yet my arguments, or rather your concessions no where tended to prove, that the secondary qualities did not subsist each alone by itself: but that they were not *at all* without the mind. Indeed in treating of figure and motion, we concluded they could not exist without the mind, because it was impossible even in thought to separate them from all secondary qualities, so as to conceive them existing by themselves. But then this was not the only argument made use of upon that occasion. But (to pass by all that hath been hitherto said, and reckon it for nothing, if you will have it so) I am content to put the whole upon this issue. If you can conceive it possible for any mixture or combination of qualities, or any sensible object whatever, to exist without the mind, then I will grant it actually to be so.

Hyl. If it comes to that, the point will soon be decided. What more easy than to conceive a tree or house existing by itself, independent of, and unperceived by any mind whatsoever? I do at this present time conceive them existing after that manner.

Phil. How say you, Hylas, can you see a thing which is at the same time unseen?

Hyl. No, that were a contradiction.

Phil. Is it not as great a contradiction to talk of *conceiving* a thing which is *unconceived?*

Hyl. It is.

Phil. The tree or house therefore which you think of, is conceived by you.

Hyl. How should it be otherwise?

Phil. And what is conceived is surely in the mind.

Hyl. Without question, that which is conceived is in the mind.

Phil. How then came you to say, you conceived a house or tree existing independent and out of all minds whatsoever?

Hyl. That was, I own, an oversight; but stay, let me consider what led me into it.—It is a pleasant mistake enough. As I was thinking of a tree in a solitary place, where no one was present to see it, methought that was to conceive a tree as existing unperceived or unthought of, not considering that I myself conceived it all the while. But now I plainly see, that all I can do is to frame ideas in my own mind. I may indeed conceive in my own thoughts the idea of a tree, or a house, or a mountain, but that is all. And this is far from proving, that I can conceive them *existing out of the minds of all spirits.*

Phil. You acknowledge then that you cannot possibly conceive how any one corporeal sensible thing should exist otherwise than in a mind.

Hyl. I do.

Phil. And yet you will earnestly contend for the truth of that which you cannot so much as conceive.

Hyl. I profess I know not what to think, but still there are some scruples remain with me. Is it not certain I see things at a distance? Do we not perceive the stars and moon, for example, to be a great way off? Is not this, I say, manifest to the senses?

Phil. Do you not in a dream too perceive those or the like objects?

Hyl. I do.

Phil. And have they not then the same appearance of being distant?

Hyl. They have.

Phil. But you do not thence conclude the apparitions in a dream to be without the mind?

Hyl. By no means.

Phil. You ought not therefore to conclude that sensible ob-

jects are without the mind, from their appearance or manner wherein they are perceived.

Hyl. I acknowledge it. But doth not my sense deceive me in those cases?

Phil. By no means. The idea or thing which you immediately perceive, neither sense nor reason inform you that it actually exists without the mind. By sense you only know that you are affected with such certain sensations of light and colours, &c. And these you will not say are without the mind.

Hyl. True: but beside all that, do you not think the sight suggests something of *outness* or *distance?*

Phil. Upon approaching a distant object, do the visible size and figure change perpetually, or do they appear the same at all distances?

Hyl. They are in a continual change.

Phil. Sight therefore doth not suggest or any way inform you, that the visible object you immediately perceive, exists at a distance,* or will be perceived when you advance further onward, there being a continued series of visible objects succeeding each other, during the whole time of your approach.

Hyl. It doth not; but still I know, upon seeing an object, what object I shall perceive after having passed over a certain distance: no matter whether it be exactly the same or no: there is still something of distance suggested in the case.

Phil. Good Hylas, do but reflect a little on the point, and then tell me whether there be any more in it than this. From the ideas you actually perceive by sight, you have by experience learned to collect what other ideas you will (according to the standing order of nature) be affected with, after such a certain succession of time and motion.

Hyl. Upon the whole, I take it to be nothing else.

Phil. Now is it not plain, that if we suppose a man born blind was on a sudden made to see, he could at first have no experience of what may be suggested by sight.

Hyl. It is.

Phil. He would not then, according to you, have any notion of distance annexed to the things he saw; but would take them for a new set of sensations existing only in his mind.

Hyl. It is undeniable.

Phil. But to make it still more plain: is not *distance* a line turned endwise to the eye?

Hyl. It is.

Phil. And can a line so situated be perceived by sight?

Hyl. It cannot.

Phil. Doth it not therefore follow that distance is not properly and immediately perceived by sight?

* See the Essay towards a new Theory of Vision; and its Vindication.

Hyl. It should seem so.

Phil. Again, is it your opinion that colours are at a distance?

Hyl. It must be acknowledged, they are only in the mind.

Phil. But do not colours appear to the eye as coexisting in the same place with extension and figures?

Hyl. They do.

Phil. How can you then conclude from sight, that figures exist without, when you acknowledge colours do not; the sensible appearance being the very same with regard to both?

Hyl. I know not what to answer.

Phil. But allowing that distance was truly and immediately perceived by the mind, yet it would not thence follow it existed out of the mind. For whatever is immediately perceived is an idea: and can any *idea* exist out of the mind?

Hyl. To suppose that were absurd: but inform me, Philonous, can we perceive or know nothing beside our ideas?

Phil. As for the rational deducing of causes from effects, that is beside our inquiry. And by the senses you can best tell, whether you perceive any thing which is not immediately perceived. And I ask you, whether the things immediately perceived, are other than your own sensations or ideas? You have indeed more than once, in the course of this conversation, declared yourself on those points; but you seem, by this last question, to have departed from what you then thought.

Hyl. To speak the truth, Philonous, I think there are two kinds of objects, the one perceived immediately, which are likewise called *ideas;* the other are real things or external objects perceived by the mediation of ideas, which are their images and representations. Now I own, ideas do not exist without the mind; but the latter sort of objects do. I am sorry I did not think of this distinction sooner; it would probably have cut short your discourse.

Phil. Are those external objects perceived by sense, or by some other faculty?

Hyl. They are perceived by sense.

Phil. How! is there any thing perceived by sense, which is not immediately perceived?

Hyl. Yes, Philonous, in some sort there is. For example, when I look on a picture or statue of Julius Cæsar, I may be said, after a manner, to perceive him (though not immediately) by my senses.

Phil. It seems, then, you will have our ideas, which alone are immediately perceived, to be pictures of external things: and that these also are perceived by sense, inasmuch as they have a conformity or resemblance to our ideas.

Hyl. That is my meaning.

Phil. And in the same way that Julius Cæsar, in himself

invisible, is nevertheless perceived by sight; real things, in themselves imperceptible, are perceived by sense.

Hyl. In the very same.

Phil. Tell me, Hylas, when you behold the picture of Julius Cæsar, do you see with your eyes any more than some colours and figures, with a certain symmetry and composition of the whole?

Hyl. Nothing else.

Phil. And would not a man, who had never known any thing of Julius Cæsar, see as much?

Hyl. He would.

Phil. Consequently he hath his sight, and the use of it, in as perfect a degree as you.

Hyl. I agree with you.

Phil. Whence comes it then that your thoughts are directed to the Roman emperor and his are not? This cannot proceed from the sensations or ideas of sense by you then perceived; since you acknowledge you have no advantage over him in that respect. It should seem therefore to proceed from reason and memory: should it not?

Hyl. It should.

Phil. Consequently it will not follow from that instance, that any thing is perceived by sense which is not immediately perceived. Though I grant we may in one acceptation be said to perceive sensible things mediately by sense: that is, when from a frequently perceived connexion, the immediate perception of ideas by one sense suggests to the mind others perhaps belonging to another sense, which are wont to be connected with them. For instance, when I hear a coach drive along the streets, immediately I perceive only the sound; but from the experience I have had that such a sound is connected with a coach, I am said to hear the coach. It is nevertheless evident, that in truth and strictness, nothing can be *heard* but *sound:* and the coach is not then properly perceived by sense, but suggested from experience. So likewise when we are said to see a red-hot bar of iron; the solidity and heat of the iron are not the objects of sight, but suggested to the imagination by the colour and figure, which are properly perceived by that sense. In short, those things alone are actually and strictly perceived by any sense, which would have been perceived, in case that same sense had then been first conferred on us. As for other things, it is plain they are only suggested to the mind by experience grounded on former perceptions. But to return to your comparison of Cæsar's picture, it is plain, if you keep to that, you must hold the real things or archetypes of our ideas are not perceived by sense, but by some internal faculty of the soul, as reason or memory. I would therefore fain know, what arguments you can draw from reason

for the existence of what you call *real things* or *material objects;* or whether you remember to have seen them formerly as they are in themselves; or if you have heard or read of any one that did.

Hyl. I see, Philonous, you are disposed to raillery; but that will never convince me.

Phil. My aim is only to learn from you the way to come at the knowledge of *material beings.* Whatever we perceive, is perceived either immediately or mediately: by sense, or by reason and reflection. But as you have excluded sense, pray show me what reason you have to believe their existence; or what *medium* you can possibly make use of to prove it, either to mine or your own understanding.

Hyl. To deal ingenuously, Philonous, now I consider the point, I do not find I can give you any good reason for it. But thus much seems pretty plain, that it is at least possible such things may really exist; and as long as there is no absurdity in supposing them, I am resolved to believe as I did, till you bring good reasons to the contrary.

Phil. What! is it come to this, that you only believe the existence of material objects, and that your belief is founded barely on the possibility of its being true? Then you will have me bring reasons against it: though another would think it reasonable, the proof should lie on him who holds the affirmative. And after all, this very point which you are now resolved to maintain without any reason, is, in effect, what you have more than once, during this discourse, seen good reason to give up. But to pass over all this; if I understand you rightly, you say our ideas do not exist without the mind; but that they are copies, images, or representations of certain originals that do.

Hyl. You take me right.

Phil. They are then like external things.

Hyl. They are.

Phil. Have those things a stable and permanent nature independent of our senses; or are they in a perpetual change, upon our producing any motions in our bodies, suspending, exerting, or altering our faculties or organs of sense.

Hyl. Real things, it is plain, have a fixed and real nature, which remains the same, notwithstanding any change in our senses, or in the posture and motion of our bodies; which, indeed, may affect the ideas in our minds, but it were absurd to think they had the same effect on things existing without the mind.

Phil. How then is it possible, that things perpetually fleeting and variable as our ideas, should be copies or images of any thing fixed and constant? or in other words, since all sensible qualities, as size, figure, colour, &c., that is, our ideas, are continually

changing upon every alteration in the distance, medium, or instruments of sensation; how can any determinate material objects be properly represented or painted forth by several distinct things, each of which is so different from and unlike the rest? Or if you say it resembles some one only of our ideas, how shall we be able to distinguish the true copy from all the false ones?

Hyl. I profess, Philonous, I am at a loss. I know not what to say to this.

Phil. But neither is this all. Which are material objects in themselves, perceptible or imperceptible?

Hyl. Properly and immediately nothing can be perceived but ideas. All material things therefore are in themselves insensible, and to be perceived only by their ideas.

Phil. Ideas then are sensible, and their archetypes or originals insensible.

Hyl. Right.

Phil. But how can that which is sensible be like that which is insensible? Can a real thing in itself *invisible* be like a *colour;* or a real thing which is not *audible,* be like a *sound?* In a word, can any thing be like a sensation or idea, but another sensation or idea?

Hyl. I must own, I think not.

Phil. Is it possible there should be any doubt in the point? Do you not perfectly know your own ideas?

Hyl. I know them perfectly; since what I do not perceive or know, can be no part of my idea.

Phil. Consider therefore, and examine them, and then tell me if there be any thing in them which can exist without the mind: or if you can conceive any thing like them existing without the mind.

Hyl. Upon inquiry, I find it is impossible for me to conceive or understand how any thing but an idea can be like an idea. And it is most evident, that *no idea can exist without the mind.*

Phil. You are therefore by your principles forced to deny the reality of sensible things, since you made it to consist in an absolute existence exterior to the mind. That is to say, you are a downright sceptic. So I have gained my point, which was to show your principles led to scepticism.

Hyl. For the present I am, if not entirely convinced, at least silenced.

Phil. I would fain know what more you would require in order to a perfect conviction. Have you not had the liberty of explaining yourself all manner of ways? Were any little slips in discourse laid hold and insisted on? Or were you not allowed to retract or reinforce any thing you had offered, as best served your purpose? Hath not every thing you could say been heard and examined with all the fairness imaginable? In a word, have

you not in every point been convinced out of your own mouth? And if you can at present discover any flaw in any of your former concessions, or think of any remaining subterfuge, any new distinction, colour, or comment whatsoever, why do you not produce it?

Hyl. A little patience, Philonous. I am at present so amazed to see myself ensnared, and as it were imprisoned in the labyrinths you have drawn me into, that on the sudden it cannot be expected I should find my way out. You must give me time to look about me, and recollect myself.

Phil. Hark; is not this the college-bell?

Hyl. It rings for prayers.

Phil. We will go in then if you please, and meet here again to-morrow morning. In the mean time you may employ your thoughts on this morning's discourse, and try if you can find any fallacy in it, or invent any new means to extricate yourself.

Hyl. Agreed.

THE SECOND DIALOGUE.

Hylas. I beg your pardon, Philonous, for not meeting you sooner. All this morning my head was so filled with our late conversation, that I had not leisure to think of the time of the day, or indeed of any thing else.

Philonous. I am glad you were so intent upon it, in hopes if there were any mistakes in your concessions, or fallacies in my reasonings from them, you will now discover them to me.

Hyl. I assure you, I have done nothing ever since I saw you, but search after mistakes and fallacies, and with that view have minutely examined the whole series of yesterday's discourse: but all in vain, for the notions it led me into, upon review appear still more clear and evident; and the more I consider them, the more irresistibly do they force my assent.

Phil. And is not this, think you, a sign that they are genuine, that they proceed from nature, and are conformable to right reason? Truth and beauty are in this alike, that the strictest survey sets them both off to advantage. While the false lustre of error and disguise cannot endure being reviewed, or too nearly inspected.

Hyl. I own there is a great deal in what you say. Nor can any one be more entirely satisfied of the truth of those odd consequences, so long as I have in view the reasonings that lead to them. But when these are out of my thoughts, there seems on the other hand something so satisfactory, so natural and intelligible in the

modern way of explaining things, that I profess I know not how to reject it.

Phil. I know not what way you mean.

Hyl. I mean the way of accounting for our sensations or ideas.

Phil. How is that?

Hyl. It is supposed the soul makes her residence in some part of the brain, from which the nerves take their rise, and are thence extended to all parts of the body: and that outward objects, by the different impressions they make on the organs of sense, communicate certain vibrative motions to the nerves; and these being filled with spirits, propagate them to the brain or seat of the soul, which according to the various impressions or traces thereby made in the brain, is variously affected with ideas.

Phil. And call you this an explication of the manner whereby we are affected with ideas?

Hyl. Why not, Philonous? have you any thing to object against it?

Phil. I would first know whether I rightly understand your hypothesis. You make certain traces in the brain to be the causes or occasions of our ideas. Pray tell me, whether by the *brain* you mean any sensible thing?

Hyl. What else think you I could mean?

Phil. Sensible things are all immediately perceivable; and those things which are immediately perceivable, are ideas; and these exist only in the mind. Thus much you have, if I mistake not, long since agreed to.

Hyl. I do not deny it.

Phil. The brain therefore you speak of, being a sensible thing, exists only in the mind. Now, I would fain know whether you think it reasonable to suppose, that one idea or thing existing in the mind, occasions all other ideas. And if you think so, pray how do you account for the origin of that primary idea or brain itself?

Hyl. I do not explain the origin of our ideas by that brain which is perceivable to sense, this being itself only a combination of sensible ideas, but by another which I imagine.

Phil. But are not things imagined as truly in the mind as things perceived?

Hyl. I must confess they are.

Phil. It comes therefore to the same thing; and you have been all this while accounting for ideas, by certain motions or impressions in the brain, that is, by some alterations in an idea, whether sensible or imaginable, it matters not.

Hyl. I begin to suspect my hypothesis.

Phil. Beside spirits, all that we know or conceive are our own ideas. When therefore you say, all ideas are occasioned by impressions in the brain, do you conceive this brain or no? If you

do, then you talk of ideas imprinted in an idea, causing that same idea, which is absurd. If you do not conceive it, you talk unintelligibly, instead of forming a reasonable hypothesis.

Hyl. I now clearly see it was a mere dream. There is nothing in it.

Phil. You need not be much concerned at it; for after all, this way of explaining things, as you called it, could never have satisfied any reasonable man. What connexion is there between a motion in the nerves, and the sensations of sound or colour in the mind? Or how is it possible these should be the effect of that?

Hyl. But I could never think it had so little in it, as now it seems to have.

Phil. Well then, are you at length satisfied that no sensible things have a real existence; and that you are in truth an arrant *sceptic?*

Hyl. It is too plain to be denied.

Phil. Look! are not the fields covered with a delightful verdure? Is there not something in the woods and groves, in the rivers and clear springs, that sooths, that delights, that transports the soul? At the prospect of the wide and deep ocean, or some huge mountain whose top is lost in the clouds, or of an old gloomy forest, are not our minds filled with a pleasing horror? Even in rocks and deserts, is there not an agreeable wildness? How sincere a pleasure is it to behold the natural beauties of the earth! to preserve and renew our relish for them, is not the veil of night alternately drawn over her face, and doth she not change her dress with the seasons? How aptly are the elements disposed! What variety and use in the meanest production of nature! What delicacy, what beauty, what contrivance in animal and vegetable bodies? How exquisitely are all things suited as well to their particular ends, as to constitute opposite parts of the whole! and while they mutually aid and support, do they not also set off and illustrate each other! Raise now your thoughts from this ball of earth, to all those glorious luminaries that adorn the high arch of heaven. The motion and situation of the planets, are they not admirable for use and order. Were those (miscalled *erratic)* globes ever known to stray, in their repeated journeys through the pathless void? Do they not measure areas round the sun ever proportioned to the times? So fixed, so immutable are the laws by which the unseen Author of nature actuates the universe. How vivid and radiant is the lustre of the fixed stars! how magnificent and rich that negligent profusion, with which they appear to be scattered throughout the whole azure vault! yet if you take the telescope, it brings into your sight a new host of stars that escape the naked eye. Here they seem contiguous and minute, but to a nearer view immense

orbs of light at various distances, far sunk in the abyss of space. Now you must call imagination to your aid. The feeble narrow sense cannot descry innumerable worlds revolving round the central fires; and in those worlds the energy of an all-perfect mind displayed in endless forms. But neither sense nor imagination are big enough to comprehend the boundless extent with all its glittering furniture. Though the labouring mind exert and strain each power to its utmost reach, there still stands out ungrasped a surplusage immeasurable. Yet all the vast bodies that compose this mighty frame, how distant and remote soever, are by some secret mechanism, some divine art and force, linked in a mutual dependence and intercourse with each other, even with this earth, which was almost slipped from my thoughts, and lost in the crowd of worlds. Is not the whole system immense, beautiful, glorious beyond expression and beyond thought? What treatment then do those philosophers deserve, who would deprive these noble and delightful scenes of all reality? How should those principles be entertained, that lead us to think all the visible beauty of the creation a false imaginary glare? To be plain, can you expect this scepticism of yours will not be thought extravagantly absurd by all men of sense?

Hyl. Other men may think as they please: but for your part you have nothing to reproach me with. My comfort is, you are as much a *sceptic* as I am.

Phil. There, Hylas, I must beg leave to differ from you.

Hyl. What! have you all along agreed to the premises, and do you now deny the conclusion, and leave me to maintain those paradoxes by myself which you led me into? This surely is not fair.

Phil. I deny that I agreed with you in those notions that led to scepticism. You indeed said, the reality of sensible things consisted in an *absolute existence* out of the minds of spirits, or distinct from their being perceived. And pursuant to this notion of reality, you are obliged to deny sensible things any real existence: that is, according to your own definition, you profess yourself a *sceptic.* But I neither said nor thought the reality of sensible things was to be defined after that manner. To me it is evident, for the reasons you allow of, that sensible things cannot exist otherwise than in a mind or spirit. Whence I conclude, not that they have no real existence, but that seeing they depend not on my thought, and have an existence distinct from being perceived by me, *there must be some other mind wherein they exist.* As sure therefore as the sensible world really exists, so sure is there an infinite, omnipresent Spirit who contains and supports it.

Hyl. What! this is no more than I and all Christians hold; nay, and all others too who believe there is a God, and that he knows and comprehends all things.

Phil. Ay, but here lies the difference. Men commonly believe that all things are known or perceived by God, because they believe the being of a God, whereas I, on the other side, immediately and necessarily conclude the being of a God, because all sensible things must be perceived by him.

Hyl. But so long as we all believe the same thing, what matter is it how we come by that belief?

Phil. But neither do we agree in the same opinion. For philosophers, though they acknowledge all corporeal beings to be perceived by God, yet they attribute to them an absolute subsistence distinct from their being perceived by any mind whatever, which I do not. Besides, is there no difference between saying, *there is a God, therefore he perceives all things:* and saying, *sensible things do really exist: and if they really exist, they are necessarily perceived by an infinite mind: therefore there is an infinite mind, or God.* This furnishes you with a direct and immediate demonstration, from a most evident principle, of the *being of a God.* Divines and philosophers had proved beyond all controversy, from the beauty and usefulness of the several parts of the creation, that it was the workmanship of God. But that setting aside all help of astronomy and natural philosophy, all contemplation of the contrivance, order, and adjustment of things, an infinite mind should be necessarily inferred from the bare existence of the sensible world, is an advantage peculiar to them only who have made this easy reflection: that the sensible world is that which we perceive by our several senses; and that nothing is perceived by the senses beside ideas; and that no idea or archetype of an idea can exist otherwise than in a mind. You may now, without any laborious search into the sciences, without any subtilty of reason, or tedious length of discourse, oppose and baffle the most strenuous advocate for atheism. Those miserable refuges, whether in an eternal succession of unthinking causes and effects, or in a fortuitous concourse of atoms; those wild imaginations of Vanini, Hobbes, and Spinoza; in a word, the whole system of atheism, is it not entirely overthrown by this single reflection on the repugnancy included in supposing the whole, or any part, even the most rude and shapeless of the visible world, to exist without a mind? Let any one of those abettors of impiety but look into his own thoughts, and there try if he can conceive how so much as a rock, a desert, a chaos, or confused jumble of atoms; how any thing at all, either sensible or imaginable, can exist independent of a mind, and he need go no further to be convinced of his folly. Can any thing be fairer than to put a dispute on such an issue, and leave it to a man himself to see if he can conceive, even in thought, what he holds to be true in fact, and from a notional to allow it a real existence?

Hyl. It cannot be denied, there is something highly serviceable to religion in what you advance. But do you not think it looks very like a notion entertained by some eminent moderns, of *seeing all things in God?*

Phil. I would gladly know that opinion; pray explain it to me.

Hyl. They conceive that the soul being immaterial, is incapable of being united with material things, so as to perceive them in themselves, but that she perceives them by her union with the substance of God, which being spiritual is therefore purely intelligible, or capable of being the immediate object of a spirit's thought. Besides, the divine essence contains in it perfections correspondent to each created being; and which are, for that reason, proper to exhibit or represent them to the mind.

Phil. I do not understand how our ideas, which are things altogether passive and inert, can be the essence, or any part (or like any part) of the essence or substance of God, who is an impassive, indivisible, purely active being. Many more difficulties and objections there are, which occur at first view against this hypothesis; but I shall only add, that it is liable to all the absurdities of the common hypotheses, in making a created world exist otherwise than in the mind of a spirit. Beside all which it hath this peculiar to itself, that it makes that material world serve to no purpose. And if it pass for a good argument against other hypotheses in the sciences, that they suppose nature or the Divine Wisdom to make something in vain, or do that by tedious round-about methods, which might have been performed in a much more easy and compendious way, what shall we think of that hypothesis which supposes the whole world made in vain?

Hyl. But what say you, are not you too of opinion that we see all things in God? If I mistake not, what you advance comes near it.

Phil. Few men think, yet all will have opinions. Hence men's opinions are superficial and confused. It is nothing strange that tenets, which in themselves are ever so different, should nevertheless be confounded with each other by those who do not consider them attentively. I shall not therefore be surprised, if some men imagine that I run into the enthusiasm of Malebranche, though in truth I am very remote from it. He builds on the most abstract general ideas, which I entirely disclaim. He asserts an absolute external world, which I deny. He maintains that we are deceived by our senses, and know not the real natures, or the true forms and figures of extended beings; of all which I hold the direct contrary. So that, upon the whole, there are no principles more fundamentally opposite than his and mine. It must be owned I entirely agree with what the holy scripture saith, that "in God we live, and move, and have our being." But that we see things in his essence,

after the manner above set forth, I am far from believing. Take here in brief my meaning. It is evident, that the things I perceive are my own ideas, and that no idea can exist unless it be in a mind. Nor is it less plain that these ideas, or things by me perceived, either themselves or their archetypes, exist independently of my mind, since I know myself not to be their author, it being out of my power to determine at pleasure, what particular ideas I shall be affected with upon opening my eyes or ears. They must therefore exist in some other mind, whose will it is they should be exhibited to me. The things, I say, immediately perceived, are ideas or sensations, call them which you will. But how can any idea or sensation exist in, or be produced by, any thing but a mind or spirit? This indeed is inconceivable; and to assert that which is inconceivable, is to talk nonsense: is it not?

Hyl. Without doubt.

Phil. But on the other hand, it is very conceivable that they should exist in, and be produced by, a spirit: since this is no more than I daily experience in myself, inasmuch as I perceive numberless ideas: and by an act of my will can form a great variety of them, and raise them up in my imagination: though it must be confessed, these creatures of the fancy are not altogether so distinct, so strong, vivid, and permanent, as those perceived by my senses, which latter are called *real things.* From all which I conclude, *there is a mind which affects me every moment with all the sensible impressions I perceive.* And from the variety, order, and manner of these, I conclude the author of them to be *wise, powerful, and good, beyond comprehension.* Mark it well: I do not say, I see things by perceiving that which represents them in the intelligible substance of God. This I do not understand; but I say, the things by me perceived are known by the understanding, and produced by the will, of an infinite Spirit. And is not all this most plain and evident? Is there any more in it, than what a little observation of our own minds, and that which passes in them, not only enableth us to conceive, but also obligeth us to acknowledge?

Hyl. I think I understand you very clearly; and own the proof you give of a Deity seems no less evident, than it is surprising. But allowing that God is the supreme and universal cause of all things, yet may not there be still a third nature besides spirits and ideas? May we not admit a subordinate and limited cause of our ideas? In a word, may there not for all that be *matter?*

Phil. How often must I inculcate the same thing? You allow the things immediately perceived by sense to exist no where without the mind; but there is nothing perceived by sense, which is not perceived immediately: therefore there is nothing

sensible that exists without the mind. The matter therefore which you still insist on, is something intelligible, I suppose; something that may be discovered by reason, and not by sense.

Hyl. You are in the right.

Phil. Pray let me know what reasoning your belief of matter is grounded on; and what this matter is in your present sense of it.

Hyl. I find myself affected with various ideas, whereof I know I am not the cause; neither are they the cause of themselves or of one another, or capable of subsisting by themselves, as being altogether inactive, fleeting, dependent beings. They have therefore some cause distinct from me and them: of which I pretend to know no more, than that it is *the cause of my ideas.* And this thing, whatever it be, I call matter.

Phil. Tell me, Hylas, hath every one a liberty to change the current proper signification annexed to a common name in any language? For example, suppose a traveller should tell you, that in a certain country men might pass unhurt through the fire; and, upon explaining himself, you found he meant by the word *fire* that which others call *water:* or if he should assert there are trees which walk upon two legs, meaning men by the term *trees.* Would you think this reasonable?

Hyl. No; I should think it very absurd. Common custom is the standard of propriety in language. And for any man to affect speaking improperly, is to pervert the use of speech, and can never serve to a better purpose, than to protract and multiply disputes where there is no difference in opinion.

Phil. And doth not *matter,* in the common current acceptation of the word, signify an extended, solid, moveable, unthinking, inactive substance?

Hyl. It doth.

Phil. And hath it not been made evident, that no such substance can possibly exist? And though it should be allowed to exist, yet how can that which is *inactive* be a *cause;* or that which is *unthinking* be a *cause of thought?* You may indeed, if you please, annex to the word *matter* a contrary meaning to what is vulgarly received; and tell me you understand by it an unextended, thinking, active being, which is the cause of our ideas. But what else is this, than to play with words, and run into that very fault you just now condemned with so much reason? I do by no means find fault with your reasoning, in that you collect a cause from the phenomena: but I deny that the cause deducible by reason can properly be termed *matter.*

Hyl. There is indeed something in what you say. But I am afraid you do not thoroughly comprehend my meaning. I would by no means be thought to deny that God, or an infinite spirit, is the supreme cause of all things. All I contend for, is that sub-

ordinate to the supreme agent there is a cause of a limited and inferior nature, which concurs in the production of our ideas, not by any act of will or spiritual efficiency, but by that kind of action which belongs to matter, viz. *motion.*

Phil. I find, you are at every turn relapsing into your old exploded conceit, of a moveable and consequently an extended substance existing without the mind. What! have you already forgot you were convinced, or are you willing I should repeat what has been said on that head? In truth this is not fair dealing in you, still to suppose the being of that which you have so often acknowledged to have no being. But not to insist further on what has been so largely handled, I ask whether all your ideas are not perfectly passive and inert, including nothing of action in them?

Hyl. They are.

Phil. And are sensible qualities any thing else but ideas?

Hyl. How often have I acknowledged that they are not?

Phil. But is not motion a sensible quality?

Hyl. It is.

Phil. Consequently it is no action.

Hyl. I agree with you. And indeed it is very plain, that when I stir my finger, it remains passive; but my will which produced the motion, is active.

Phil. Now I desire to know in the first place, whether motion being allowed to be no action, you can conceive any action besides volition: and in the second place, whether to say something and conceive nothing be not to talk nonsense: and lastly, whether having considered the premises, you do not perceive that to suppose any efficient or active cause of our ideas, other than *spirit,* is highly absurd and unreasonable?

Hyl. I give up the point entirely. But though matter may not be a cause, yet what hinders its being an *instrument* subservient to the supreme agent in the production of our ideas?

Phil. An instrument, say you; pray what may be the figure, springs, wheels, and motions of that instrument?

Hyl. Those I pretend to determine nothing of, both the substance and its qualities being entirely unknown to me.

Phil. What? You are then of opinion, it is made up of unknown parts, that it hath unknown motions, and an unknown shape.

Hyl. I do not believe it hath any figure or motion at all, being already convinced, that no sensible qualities can exist in an unperceiving substance.

Phil. But what notion is it possible to frame of an instrument void of all sensible qualities, even extension itself?

Hyl. I do not pretend to have any notion of it.

Phil. And what reason have you to think, this unknown, this

inconceivable somewhat doth exist? Is it that you imagine God cannot act as well without it, or that you find by experience the use of some such thing, when you form ideas in your own mind?

Hyl. You are always teazing me for reasons of my belief. Pray what reasons have you not to believe it?

Phil. It is to me a sufficient reason not to believe the existence of any thing, if I see no reason for believing it. But not to insist on reasons for believing, you will not so much as let me know what it is you would have me believe, since you say you have no manner of notion of it. After all, let me entreat you to consider whether it be like a philosopher, or even like a man of common sense, to pretend to believe you know not what and you know not why.

Hyl. Hold, Philonous. When I tell you matter is an *instrument*, I do not mean altogether nothing. It is true, I know not the particular kind of instrument: but however I have some notion of *instrument in general*, which I apply to it.

Phil. But what if it should prove that there is something, even in the most general notion of *instrument*, as taken in a distinct sense from *cause*, which makes the use of it inconsistent with the divine attributes?

Hyl. Make that appear, and I shall give up the point.

Phil. What mean you by the general nature or notion of *instrument?*

Hyl. That which is common to all particular instruments, composeth the general notion.

Phil. Is it not common to all instruments, that they are applied to the doing those things only, which cannot be performed by the mere act of our wills? Thus for instance, I never use an instrument to move my finger, because it is done by a volition. But I should use one, if I were to remove part of a rock, or tear up a tree by the roots. Are you of the same mind? Or can you show any example where an instrument is made use of in producing an effect immediately depending on the will of the agent?

Hyl. I own, I cannot.

Phil. How therefore can you suppose, that an all-perfect Spirit, on whose will all things have an absolute and immediate dependence, should need an instrument in his operations, or not needing it make use of it? Thus it seems to me that you are obliged to own the use of a lifeless inactive instrument, to be incompatible with the infinite perfection of God; that is, by your own confession to give up the point.

Hyl. It doth not readily occur what I can answer you.

Phil. But methinks you should be ready to own the truth, when it hath been fairly proved to you. We indeed, who are beings of finite powers, are forced to make use of instruments. And the use of an instrument showeth the agent to be limited

by rules of another's prescription, and that he cannot obtain his end, but in such a way and by such conditions. Whence it seems a clear consequence, that the supreme unlimited agent useth no tool or instrument at all. The will of an omnipotent Spirit is no sooner exerted than executed, without the application of means, which, if they are employed by inferior agents, it is not upon account of any real efficacy that is in them, or necessary aptitude to produce any effect, but merely in compliance with the laws of nature, or those conditions prescribed to them by the first cause, who is himself above all limitation or prescription whatsoever.

Hyl. I will no longer maintain that matter is an instrument. However, I would not be understood to give up its existence neither; since, notwithstanding what hath been said, it may still be an *occasion.*

Phil. How many shapes is your matter to take? Or how often must it be proved not to exist, before you are content to part with it? But to say no more of this (though by all the laws of disputation I may justly blame you for so frequently changing the signification of the principal term) I would fain know what you mean by affirming that matter is an occasion, having already denied it to be a cause. And when you have shown in what sense you understand *occasion*, pray in the next place be pleased to show me what reason induceth you to believe there is such an occasion of our ideas.

Hyl. As to the first point: by *occasion* I mean an inactive, unthinking being, at the presence whereof God excites ideas in our minds.

Phil. And what may be the nature of that inactive, unthinking being?

Hyl. I know nothing of its nature.

Phil. Proceed then to the second point, and assign some reason why we should allow an existence to this inactive, unthinking, unknown thing.

Hyl. When we see ideas produced in our minds after an orderly and constant manner, it is natural to think they have some fixed and regular occasions, at the presence of which they are excited.

Phil. You acknowledge then God alone to be the cause of our ideas, and that he causes them at the presence of those occasions.

Hyl. That is my opinion.

Phil. Those things which you say are present to God, without doubt he perceives.

Hyl. Certainly; otherwise they could not be to him an occasion of acting.

Phil. Not to insist now on your making sense of this hypothesis, or answering all the puzzling questions and difficulties it

is liable to: I only ask whether the order and regularity observable in the series of our ideas, or the course of nature, be not sufficiently accounted for by the wisdom and power of God; and whether it doth not derogate from those attributes, to suppose he is influenced, directed, or put in mind, when and what he is to act, by any unthinking substance. And lastly, whether in case I granted all you contend for, it would make any thing to your purpose, it not being easy to conceive how the external or absolute existence of an unthinking substance, distinct from its being perceived, can be inferred from my allowing that there are certain things perceived by the mind of God, which are to him the occasion of producing ideas in us.

Hyl. I am perfectly at a loss what to think, this notion of *occasion* seeming now altogether as groundless as the rest.

Phil. Do you not at length perceive, that in all these different acceptations of *matter*, you have been only supposing you know not what, for no manner of reason, and to no kind of use?

Hyl. I freely own myself less fond of my notions, since they have been so accurately examined. But still, methinks I have some confused perception that there is such a thing as *matter*.

Phil. Either you perceive the being of matter immediately, or mediately. If immediately, pray inform me by which of the senses you perceive it. If mediately, let me know by what reasoning it is inferred from those things which you perceive immediately. So much for the perception. Then for the matter itself, I ask whether it is object, substratum, cause, instrument, or occasion? You have already pleaded for each of these, shifting your notions, and making matter to appear sometimes in one shape, then in another. And what you have offered hath been disapproved and rejected by yourself. If you have any thing new to advance, I would gladly hear it.

Hyl. I think I have already offered all I had to say on those heads. I am at a loss what more to urge.

Phil. And yet you are loath to part with your old prejudice. But to make you quit it more easily, I desire that, besides what has been hitherto suggested, you will further consider whether, upon supposition that matter exists, you can possibly conceive how you should be affected by it? Or supposing it did not exist, whether it be not evident you might for all that be affected with the same ideas you now are, and consequently have the very same reasons to believe its existence that you now can have?

Hyl. I acknowledge it is possible we might perceive all things just as we do now, though there was no matter in the world; neither can I conceive, if there be matter, how it should produce any idea in our minds. And I do further grant, you have entirely satisfied me, that it is impossible there should be such a thing as matter in any of the foregoing acceptations. But still

I cannot help supposing that there is *matter* in some sense or other. What that is I do not indeed pretend to determine.

Phil. I do not expect you should define exactly the nature of that unknown being. Only be pleased to tell me, whether it is a substance: and if so, whether you can suppose a substance without accidents: or in case you suppose it to have accidents or qualities, I desire you will let me know what those qualities are, at least what is meant by matter's supporting them.

Hyl. We have already argued on those points. I have no more to say to them. But to prevent any further questions, let me tell you, I at present understand by *matter* neither substance nor accident, thinking nor extended being, neither cause, instrument, nor occasion, but something entirely unknown, distinct from all these.

Phil. It seems then you include in your present notion of matter, nothing but the general abstract of idea of *entity*.

Hyl. Nothing else, save only that I superadd to this general idea the negation of all those particular things, qualities, or ideas that I perceive, imagine, or in any wise apprehend.

Phil. Pray where do you suppose this unknown matter to exist?

Hyl. Oh Philonous! now you think you have entangled me; for if I say it exists in place, then you will infer that it exists in the mind, since it is agreed, that place or extension exists only in the mind: but I am not ashamed to own my ignorance. I know not where it exists; only I am sure it exists not in place. There is a negative answer for you: and you must expect no other to all the questions you put for the future about matter.

Phil. Since you will not tell me where it exists, be pleased to inform me after what manner you suppose it to exist, or what you mean by its *existence*.

Hyl. It neither thinks nor acts, neither perceives, nor is perceived.

Phil. But what is there positive in your abstracted notion of its existence?

Hyl. Upon a nice observation, I do not find I have any positive notion or meaning at all. I tell you again I am not ashamed to own my ignorance. I know not what is meant by its *existence*, or how it exists.

Phil. Continue, good Hylas, to act the same ingenuous part, and tell me sincerely whether you can frame a distinct idea of entity in general, prescinded from and exclusive of all thinking and corporeal beings, all particular things whatsoever.

Hyl. Hold, let me think a little——I profess, Philonous, I do not find that I can. At first glance methought I had some dilute and airy notion of pure entity in abstract; but upon closer attention it hath quite vanished out of sight. The more I think

on it, the more am I confirmed in my prudent resolution of giving none but negative answers, and not pretending to the least degree of any positive knowledge or conception of matter, its *where*, its *how*, its *entity*, or any thing belonging to it.

Phil. When therefore you speak of the existence of matter, you have not any notion in your mind.

Hyl. None at all.

Phil. Pray tell me if the case stands not thus: at first, from a belief of material substance you would have it that the immediate objects existed without the mind; then that their archetypes; then causes; next instruments: then occasions: lastly, *something in general*, which being interpreted proves *nothing*. So matter comes to nothing. What think you, Hylas? is not this a fair summary of your whole proceeding?

Hyl. Be that as it will, yet I still insist upon it, that our not being able to conceive a thing, is no argument against its existence.

Phil. That from a cause, effect, operation, sign, or other circumstance, there may reasonably be inferred the existence of a thing not immediately perceived, and that it were absurd for any man to argue against the existence of that thing, from his having no direct and positive notion of it, I freely own. But where there is nothing of all this; where neither reason nor revelation induces us to believe the existence of a thing; where we have not even a relative notion of it; where an abstraction is made from perceiving and being perceived, from spirit and idea: lastly, where there is not so much as the most inadequate or faint idea pretended to: I will not indeed thence conclude against the reality of any notion or existence of any thing: but my inference shall be, that you mean nothing at all: that you imply words to no manner of purpose, without any design or signification whatsoever. And I leave it to you to consider how mere jargon should be treated.

Hyl. To deal frankly with you, Philonous, your arguments seem in themselves unanswerable, but they have not so great an effect on me as to produce that entire conviction, that hearty acquiescence which attends demonstration. I find myself still relapsing into an obscure surmise of I know not what, *matter*.

Phil. But are you not sensible, Hylas, that two things must concur to take away all scruple, and work a plenary assent in the mind? Let a visible object be set in never so clear a light, yet if there is any imperfection in the sight, or if the eye is not directed towards it, it will not be distinctly seen. And though a demonstration be never so well grounded and fairly proposed, yet if there is withal a stain of prejudice, or a wrong bias on the understanding, can it be expected on a sudden to perceive clearly and adhere firmly to the truth? No, there is need of time

and pains; the attention must be awakened and detained by a frequent repetition of the same thing placed oft in the same, oft in different lights. I have said it already, and find I must still repeat and inculcate, that it is an unaccountable license you take in pretending to maintain you know not what, for you know not what reason, to you know not what purpose. Can this be paralleled in any art or science, any sect or profession of men? Or is there any thing so barefacedly groundless and unreasonable to be met with even in the lowest of common conversation? But perhaps you will still say, matter may exist, though at the same time you neither know what is meant by *matter*, nor by its *existence*. This indeed is surprising, and the more so because it is altogether voluntary, you not being led to it by any one reason; for I challenge you to show me that thing in nature which needs matter to explain or account for it.

Hyl. The reality of things cannot be maintained without supposing the existence of matter. And is not this, think you, a good reason why I should be earnest in its defence?

Phil. The reality of things! What things, sensible or intelligible?

Hyl. Sensible things.

Phil. My glove, for example?

Hyl. That or any other thing perceived by the senses.

Phil. But to fix on some particular thing; is it not a sufficient evidence to me of the existence of this *glove*, that I see it, and feel it, and wear it? Or if this will not do, how is it possible I should be assured of the reality of this thing, which I actually see in this place, by supposing that some unknown thing, which I never did or can see, exists after an unknown manner, in an unknown place, or in no place at all? How can the supposed reality of that which is intangible, be a proof that any thing tangible really exists? Or of that which is invisible, that any visible thing, or in general of any thing which is imperceptible, that a perceptible exists? Do but explain this, and I shall think nothing too hard for you.

Hyl. Upon the whole, I am content to own the existence of matter is highly improbable; but the direct and absolute impossibility of it does not appear to me.

Phil. But granting matter to be possible, yet upon that account merely it can have no more claim to existence, than a golden mountain or a centaur.

Hyl. I acknowledge it; but still you do not deny it is possible; and that which is possible, for aught you know, may actually exist.

Phil. I deny it to be possible; and have, if I mistake not, evidently proved from your own concessions that it is not. In the common sense of the word *matter*, is there any more implied

than an extended, solid, figured, moveable substance, existing without the mind? And have not you acknowledged over and over, that you have seen evident reason for denying the possibility of such a substance?

Hyl. True, but that is only one sense of the term *matter*.

Phil. But is it not the only proper genuine received sense? and if matter in such a sense be proved impossible, may it not be thought with good grounds absolutely impossible? Else how could any thing be proved impossible? Or indeed how could there be any proof at all one way or other, to a man who takes the liberty to unsettle and change the common signification of words?

Hyl. I thought philosophers might be allowed to speak more accurately than the vulgar, and were not always confined to the common acceptation of a term.

Phil. But this now mentioned is the common received sense among philosophers themselves. But not to insist on that, have you not been allowed to take matter in what sense you pleased? And have you not used this privilege in the utmost extent, sometimes entirely changing, at others leaving out or putting into the definition of it whatever for the present best served your design, contrary to all the known rules of reason and logic? And hath not this shifting, unfair method of yours spun out our dispute to an unnecessary length; matter having been particularly examined, and by your own confession refuted in each of those senses? And can any more be required to prove the absolute impossibility of a thing, than the proving it impossible in every particular sense, that either you or any one else understands it in?

Hyl. But I am not so thoroughly satisfied that you have proved the impossibility of matter in the last most obscure, abstracted and indefinite sense.

Phil. When is a thing shown to be impossible?

Hyl. When a repugnancy is demonstrated between the ideas comprehended in its definition.

Phil. But where there are no ideas, there no repugnancy can be demonstrated between ideas.

Hyl. I agree with you.

Phil. Now in that which you call the obscure, indefinite sense of the word *matter*, it is plain, by your own confession, there was included no idea at all, no sense except an unknown sense, which is the same thing as none. You are not therefore to expect I should prove a repugnancy between ideas where there are no ideas, or the impossibility of matter taken in an *unknown* sense, that is no sense at all. My business was only to show, you meant *nothing*: and this you were brought to own. So that in all your various senses, you have been shown either to mean nothing at all, or if any thing, an absurdity. And if this be not sufficient

to prove the impossibility of a thing, I desire you will let me know what is.

Hyl. I acknowledge you have proved that matter is impossible; nor do I see what more can be said in defence of it. But at the same time that I give up this, I suspect all my other notions. For surely none could be more seemingly evident than this once was: and yet it now seems as false and absurd as ever it did true before. But I think we have discussed the point sufficiently for the present. The remaining part of the day I would willingly spend, in running over in my thoughts the several heads of this morning's conversation, and to morrow shall be glad to meet you here again about the same time.

Phil. I will not fail to attend you.

THE THIRD DIALOGUE.

Philonous. TELL me, Hylas, what are the fruits of yesterday's meditation? Hath it confirmed you in the same mind you were in at parting? or have you since seen cause to change your opinion?

Hylas. Truly my opinion is, that all our opinions are alike vain and uncertain. What we approve to-day, we condemn to morrow. We keep a stir about knowledge, and spend our lives in the pursuit of it, when, alas! we know nothing all the while: nor do I think it possible for us ever to know any thing in this life. Our faculties are too narrow and too few. Nature certainly never intended us for speculation.

Phil. What! say you we can know nothing, Hylas?

Hyl. There is not that single thing in the world, whereof we can know the real nature, or what it is in itself.

Phil. Will you tell me I do not really know what fire or water is?

Hyl. You may indeed know that fire appears hot, and water fluid: but this is no more than knowing what sensations are produced in your own mind, upon the application of fire and water to your organs of sense. Their internal constitution, their true and real nature, you are utterly in the dark as to that.

Phil. Do I not know this to be a real stone that I stand on, and that which I see before my eyes to be a real tree?

Hyl. Know? No, it is impossible you or any man alive should know it. All you know is, that you have such a certain idea or appearance in your own mind. But what is this to the real tree or stone? I tell you, that colour, figure, and hardness, which you perceive, are not the real natures of those things, or in the least

like them. The same may be said of all other real things or corporeal substances which compose the world. They have none of them any thing in themselves, like those sensible qualities by us perceived. We should not therefore pretend to affirm or know any thing of them, as they are in their own nature.

Phil. But surely, Hylas, I can distinguish gold, for example, from iron: and how could this be, if I knew not what either truly was?

Hyl. Believe me, Philonous, you can only distinguish between your own ideas. That yellowness, that weight, and other sensible qualities, think you they are really in the gold? They are only relative to the senses, and have no absolute existence in nature. And in pretending to distinguish the species of real things, by the appearances in your mind, you may perhaps act as wisely as he that should conclude two men were of a different species, because their clothes were not of the same colour.

Phil. It seems then we are altogether put off with the appearances of things, and those false ones too. The very meat I eat, and the cloth I wear, have nothing in them like what I see and feel.

Hyl. Even so.

Phil. But is it not strange the whole world should be thus imposed on and so foolish as to believe their senses? And yet I know not how it is, but men eat, and drink, and sleep, and perform all the offices of life as comfortably and conveniently, as if they really knew the things they are conversant about.

Hyl. They do so: but you know ordinary practice does not requ re a nicety of speculative knowledge. Hence the vulgar retain their mistakes, and for all that, make a shift to bustle through the affairs of life. But philosophers know better things.

Phil. You mean, they know that they *know nothing.*

Hyl. That is the very top and perfection of human knowledge.

Phil. But are you all this while in earnest, Hylas; and are you seriously persuaded that you know nothing real in the world? Suppose you are going to write, would you not call for pen, ink, and paper, like another man; and do you not know what it is you call for?

Hyl. How often must I tell you, that I know not the real nature of any one thing in the universe? I may, indeed, upon occasion, make use of pen, ink, and paper. But what any one of them is in its own true nature, I declare positively I know not. And the same is true with regard to every other corporeal thing. And, what is more, we are not only ignorant of the true and real nature of things, but even of their existence. It cannot be denied that we perceive such certain appearances or ideas; but it cannot be concluded from thence that bodies really exist. Nay, now I think on it, I must, agreeably to my former con-

cessions, further declare, that it is impossible any real corporeal thing should exist in nature.

Phil. You amaze me. Was ever any thing more wild and extravagant than the notions you now maintain: and is it not evident you are led into all these extravagancies by the belief of *material substance?* This makes you dream of those unknown natures in every thing. It is this occasions your distinguishing between the reality and sensible appearances of things. It is to this you are indebted for being ignorant of what every body else knows perfectly well. Nor is this all: you are not only ignorant of the true nature of every thing, but you know not whether any thing really exists, or whether there are any true natures at all; forasmuch as you attribute to your material beings an absolute or external existence, wherein you suppose their reality consists. And as you are forced in the end to acknowledge such an existence means either a direct repugnancy, or nothing at all, it follows that you are obliged to pull down your own hypothesis of material substance, and positively to deny the real existence of any part of the universe. And so you are plunged into the deepest and most deplorable *scepticism* that ever man was. Tell me, Hylas, is it not as I say?

Hyl. I agree with you. *Material substance* was no more than an hypothesis, and a false and groundless one too. I will no longer spend my breath in defence of it. But whatever hypothesis you advance, or whatsoever scheme of things you introduce in its stead, I doubt not it will appear every whit as false: let me but be allowed to question you upon it. That is, suffer me to serve you in your own kind, and I warrant it shall conduct you through as many perplexities and contradictions, to the very same state of scepticism that I myself am in at present.

Phil. I assure you, Hylas, I do not pretend to frame any hypothesis at all. I am of a vulgar cast, simple enough to believe my senses, and leave things as I find them. To be plain, it is my opinion, that the real things are those very things I see and feel, and perceive by my senses. These I know, and finding they answer all the necessities and purposes of life, have no reason to be solicitous about any other unknown beings. A piece of sensible bread, for instance, would stay my stomach better than ten thousand times as much of that insensible, unintelligible, real bread you speak of. It is likewise my opinion, that colours and other sensible qualities are on the objects. I cannot for my life help thinking that snow is white, and fire hot. You indeed, who by *snow* and *fire* mean certain external, unperceived, unperceiving substances, are in the right to deny whiteness or heat to be affections inherent in them. But I, who understand by those words the things I see and feel, am obliged to think like other folks. And as I am no sceptic with regard

to the nature of things, so neither am I as to their existence. That a thing should be really perceived by my senses, and at the same time not really exist, is to me a plain contradiction; since I cannot prescind or abstract, even in thought, the existence of a sensible thing from its being perceived. Wood, stones, fire, water, flesh, iron, and the like things, which I name and discourse of, are things that I know. And I should not have known them, but that I perceived them by my senses; and things perceived by the senses are immediately perceived; and things immediately perceived are ideas; and ideas cannot exist without the mind; their existence therefore consists in being perceived; when therefore they are actually perceived, there can be no doubt of their existence. Away then with all that scepticism, all those ridiculous philosophical doubts. What a jest is it for a philosopher to question the existence of sensible things, till he hath it proved to him from the veracity of God: or to pretend our knowledge in this point falls short of intuition or demonstration! I might as well doubt of my own being, as of the being of those things I actually see and feel.

Hyl. Not so fast, Philonous: you say you cannot conceive how sensible things should exist without the mind. Do you not?

Phil. I do.

Hyl. Supposing you were annihilated, cannot you conceive it possible that things perceivable by sense may still exist?

Phil. I can; but then it must be in another mind. When I deny sensible things an existence out of the mind, I do not mean my mind in particular, but all minds. Now it is plain they have an existence exterior to my mind, since I find them by experience to be independent of it. There is therefore some other mind wherein they exist, during the intervals between the times of my perceiving them: as likewise they did before my birth, and would do after my supposed annihilation. And as the same is true with regard to all other finite created spirits, it necessarily follows, there is an *omnipresent, eternal Mind,* which knows and comprehends all things, and exhibits them to our view in such a manner, and according to such rules as he himself hath ordained, and are by us termed the *laws of nature.*

Hyl. Answer me, Philonous. Are all our ideas perfectly inert beings? Or have they any agency included in them?

Phil. They are altogether passive and inert.

Hyl. And is not God an agent, a being purely active?

Phil. I acknowledge it.

Hyl. No idea therefore can be like unto, or represent the nature of God.

Phil. It cannot.

Hyl. Since therefore you have no idea of the mind of God, how can you conceive it possible, that things should exist in his

mind? Or, if you can conceive the mind of God without having an idea of it, why may not I be allowed to conceive the existence of matter, notwithstanding that I have no idea of it?

Phil. As to your first question: I own I have properly no idea, either of God or any other spirit; for these being active, cannot be represented by things perfectly inert, as our ideas are. I do nevertheless know, that I, who am a spirit or thinking substance, exist as certainly, as I know my ideas exist. Further, I know what I mean by the terms *I* and *myself;* and I know this immediately, or intuitively, though I do not perceive it as I perceive a triangle, a colour, or a sound. The mind, spirit, or soul, is that indivisible, unextended thing, which thinks, acts, and perceives. I say *indivisible,* because unextended; and *unextended,* because extended, figured, moveable things, are ideas; and that which perceives ideas, which thinks and wills, is plainly itself no idea, nor like an idea. Ideas are things inactive, and perceived: and spirits a sort of beings altogether different from them. I do not therefore say my soul is an idea, or like an idea. However, taking the word *idea* in a large sense, my soul may be said to furnish me with an idea, that is, an image, or likeness of God, though indeed extremely inadequate. For all the notion I have of God, is obtained by reflecting on my own soul, heightening its powers, and removing its imperfections. I have therefore, though not an inactive idea, yet in myself some sort of an active thinking image of the Deity. And though I perceive him not by sense, yet I have a notion of him, or know him by reflection and reasoning. My own mind and my own ideas I have an immediate knowledge of; and by the help of these, do mediately apprehend the possibility of the existence of other spirits and ideas. Further, from my own being, and from the dependency I find in myself and my ideas, I do by an act of reason necessarily infer the existence of a God, and of all created things in the mind of God. So much for your first question. For the second: I suppose by this time you can answer it yourself. For you neither perceive matter objectively, as you do an inactive being or idea, nor know it, as you do yourself, by a reflex act: neither do you mediately apprehend it by similitude of the one or the other: nor yet collect it by reasoning from that which you know immediately. All which makes the case of *matter* widely different from that of the *Deity.*

Hyl. You say your own soul supplies you with some sort of an idea or image of God. But at the same time you acknowledge you have, properly speaking, no idea of your own soul. You even affirm that spirits are a sort of beings altogether different from ideas. Consequently that no idea can be like a spirit. We have therefore no idea of any spirit. You admit nevertheless that there is spiritual substance, although you have no idea of it;

while you deny there can be such a thing as material substance, because you have no notion or idea of it. Is this fair dealing? To act consistently, you must either admit matter or reject spirit. What say you to this?

Phil. I say in the first place, that I do not deny the existence of material substance merely because I have no notion of it, but because the notion of it is inconsistent, or in other words, because it is repugnant that there should be a notion of it. Many things, for aught I know, may exist, whereof neither I nor any other man hath or can have any idea or notion whatsoever. But then those things must be possible, that is, nothing inconsistent must be included in their definition. I say secondly, that although we believe things to exist which we do not perceive; yet we may not believe that any particular thing exists, without some reason for such belief: but I have no reason for believing the existence of matter. I have no immediate intuition thereof: neither can I mediately from my sensations, ideas, notions, actions, or passions, infer an unthinking, unperceiving, inactive substance, either by probable deduction, or necessary consequence. Whereas the being of myself, that is, my own soul, mind, or thinking principle, I evidently know by reflection. You will forgive me if I repeat the same things in answer to the same objections. In the very notion or definition of material substance, there is included a manifest repugnance and inconsistency. But this cannot be said of the notion of spirit. That ideas should exist in what doth not perceive, or be produced by what doth not act, is repugnant. But it is no repugnancy to say, that a perceiving thing should be the subject of ideas, or an active thing the cause of them. It is granted we have neither an immediate evidence nor a demonstrative knowledge of the existence of other finite spirits; but it will not thence follow that such spirits are on a foot with material substances: if to suppose the one be inconsistent, and it be not inconsistent to suppose the other; if the one can be inferred by no argument, and there is a probability for the other; if we see signs and effects indicating distinct finite agents like ourselves, and see no sign or symptom whatever that leads to a rational belief of matter. I say lastly, that I have a notion of spirit, though I have not, strictly speaking, an idea of it. I do not perceive it as an idea or by means of an idea, but know it by reflection.

Hyl. Notwithstanding all you have said, to me it seems, that according to your own way of thinking, and in consequence of your own principles, it should follow that you are only a system of floating ideas, without any substance to support them. Words are not to be used without a meaning. And as there is no more meaning in spiritual substance than in material substance, the one is to be exploded as well as the other.

Phil. How often must I repeat, that I know or am conscious of my own being; and that I myself am not my ideas, but somewhat else, a thinking, active principle that perceives, knows, wills, and operates about ideas? I know that I, one and the same self, perceive both colours and sounds: that a colour cannot perceive a sound, nor a sound a colour: that I am therefore one individual principle, distinct from colour and sound; and, for the same reason, from all other sensible things and inert ideas. But I am not in like manner conscious either of the existence or essence of matter. On the contrary, I know that nothing inconsistent can exist, and that the existence of matter implies an inconsistency. Further, I know what I mean, when I affirm that there is a spiritual substance or support of ideas, that is, that a spirit knows and perceives ideas. But I do not know what is meant, when it is said, that an unperceiving substance hath inherent in it and supports either ideas or the archetypes of ideas. There is therefore upon the whole no parity of case between spirit and matter.

Hyl. I own myself satisfied in this point. But do you in earnest think, the real existence of sensible things consists in their being actually perceived? If so, how comes it that all mankind distinguish between them? Ask the first man you meet, and he shall tell you, *to be perceived* is one thing, and *to exist* is another.

Phil. I am content, Hylas, to appeal to the common sense of the world for the truth of my notion. Ask the gardener, why he thinks yonder cherry-tree exists in the garden, and he shall tell you, because he sees and feels it; in a word, because he perceives it by his senses. Ask him, why he thinks an orange-tree not to be there, and he shall tell you, because he does not perceive it. What he perceives by sense, that he terms a real being, and saith it *is*, or *exists;* but that which is not perceivable, the same, he saith, hath no being.

Hyl. Yes, Philonous, I grant the existence of a sensible thing consists in being perceivable, but not in being actually perceived.

Phil. And what is perceivable but an idea? And can an idea exist without being actually perceived? These are points long since agreed between us.

Hyl. But be your opinion never so true, yet surely you will not deny it is shocking, and contrary to the common sense of men. Ask the fellow, whether yonder tree hath an existence out of his mind: what answer, think you, he would make?

Phil. The same that I should myself, to wit, that it doth exist out of his mind. But then to a Christian it cannot surely be shocking to say, the real tree existing without his mind is truly known and comprehended by (that is, *exists in*) the infinite mind of God. Probably he may not at first glance be aware of the direct and immediate proof there is of this, inasmuch as the very

being of a tree, or any other sensible thing, implies a mind wherein it is. But the point itself he cannot deny. The question between the materialists and me is not, whether things have a real existence out of the mind of this or that person, but whether they have an absolute existence, distinct from being perceived by God, and exterior to all minds. This indeed some heathens and philosophers have affirmed, but whoever entertains notions of the Deity suitable to the holy scriptures, will be of another opinion.

Hyl. But according to your notions, what difference is there between real things, and chimeras formed by the imagination, or the visions of a dream, since they are all equally in the mind?

Phil. The ideas formed by the imagination are faint and indistinct; they have besides an entire dependence on the will. But the ideas perceived by sense, that is, real things, are more vivid and clear, and being imprinted on the mind by a spirit distinct from us, have not a like dependence on our will. There is therefore no danger of confounding these with the foregoing: and there is as little of confounding them with the visions of a dream, which are dim, irregular, and confused. And though they should happen to be never so lively and natural, yet by their not being connected, and of a piece with the preceding and subsequent transactions of our lives, they might easily be distinguished from realities. In short, by whatever method you distinguish *things* from *chimeras* on your own scheme, the same, it is evident, will hold also upon mine. For it must be, I presume, by some perceived difference, and I am not for depriving you of any one thing that you perceive.

Hyl. But still, Philonous, you hold, there is nothing in the world but spirits and ideas. And this, you must needs acknowledge, sounds very oddly.

Phil. I own the word *idea*, not being commonly used for *thing*, sounds something out of the way. My reason for using it was, because a necessary relation to the mind is understood to be implied by that term; and it is now commonly used by philosophers, to denote the immediate objects of the understanding. But however oddly the proposition may sound in words, yet it includes nothing so very strange or shocking in its sense, which in effect amounts to no more than this, to wit, that there are only things perceiving, and things perceived; or that every unthinking being is necessarily, and from the very nature of its existence, perceived by some mind; if not by any finite created mind, yet certainly by the infinite mind of God, in whom "we live, and move, and have our being." Is this as strange as to say, the sensible qualities are not on the objects: or, that we cannot be sure of the existence of things, or know any thing of their real natures, though we both see and feel them, and perceive them by all our senses?

Hyl. And in consequence of this, must we not think there are no such things as physical or corporeal causes; but that a spirit is the immediate cause of all the phenomena in nature? Can there be any thing more extravagant than this?

Phil. Yes, it is infinitely more extravagant to say, a thing which is inert, operates on the mind, and which is unperceiving, is the cause of our perceptions. Besides, that which to you, I know not for what reason, seems so extravagant, is no more than the holy scriptures assert in a hundred places. In them God is represented as the sole and immediate author of all those effects, which some heathens and philosophers are wont to ascribe to nature, matter, fate, or the like unthinking principle. This is so much the constant language of scripture, that it were needless to confirm it by citations.

Hyl. You are not aware, Philonous, that in making God the immediate author of all the motions in nature, you make him the author of murder, sacrilege, adultery, and the like heinous sins.

Phil. In answer to that, I observe first, that the imputation of guilt is the same, whether a person commits an action with or without an instrument. In case therefore you suppose God to act by the mediation of an instrument, or occasion, called *matter*, you as truly make him the author of sin as I, who think him the immediate agent in all those operations vulgarly ascribed to nature. I further observe, that sin or moral turpitude doth not consist in the outward physical action or motion, but in the internal deviation of the will from the laws of reason and religion. This is plain, in that the killing an enemy in a battle, or putting a criminal legally to death, is not thought sinful, though the outward act be the very same with that in the case of murder. Since therefore sin doth not consist in the physical action, the making God an immediate cause of all such actions, is not making him the author of sin. Lastly, I have no where said that God is the only agent who produces all the motions in bodies. It is true, I have denied there are any other agents beside spirits: but this is very consistent with allowing to thinking, rational beings, in the production of motions, the use of limited powers, ultimately indeed derived from God, but immediately under the direction of their own wills, which is sufficient to entitle them to all the guilt of their actions.

Hyl. But the denying matter, Philonous, or corporeal substance; there is the point. You can never persuade me that this is not repugnant to the universal sense of mankind. Were our dispute to be determined by most voices, I am confident you would give up the point, without gathering the votes.

Phil. I wish both our opinions were fairly stated and submitted to the judgment of men who had plain common sense,

without the prejudices of a learned education. Let me be represented as one who trusts his senses, who thinks he knows the things he sees and feels, and entertains no doubts of their existence; and you fairly set forth with all your doubts, your paradoxes, and your scepticism about you, and I shall willingly acquiesce in the determination of any indifferent person. That there is no substance wherein ideas can exist beside spirit, is to me evident. And that the objects immediately perceived are ideas, is on all hands agreed. And that sensible qualities are objects immediately perceived, no one can deny. It is therefore evident there can be no *substratum* of those qualities but spirit, in which they exist, not by way of mode or property, but as a thing perceived in that which perceives it. I deny therefore that there is any unthinking *substratum* of the objects of sense, and in that acceptation that there is any material substance. But if by *material substance* is meant only sensible body, that which is seen and felt (and the unphilosophical part of the world, I dare say, mean no more), then I am more certain of matter's existence than you, or any other philosopher, pretend to be. If there be any thing which makes the generality of mankind averse from the notions I espouse, it is a misapprehension that I deny the reality of sensible things: but as it is you who are guilty of that and not I, it follows that in truth their aversion is against your notions, and not mine. I do therefore assert that I am as certain as of my own being, that there are bodies or corporeal substances (meaning the things I perceive by my senses); and that granting this, the bulk of mankind will take no thought about, nor think themselves at all concerned in the fate of those unknown natures, and philosophical quiddities, which some men are so fond of.

Hyl. What say you to this? Since, according to you, men judge of the reality of things by their senses, how can a man be mistaken in thinking the moon a plain lucid surface, about a foot in diameter; or a square tower, seen at a distance, round; or an oar, with one end in the water, crooked?

Phil. He is not mistaken with regard to the ideas he actually perceives; but in the inferences he makes from his present perceptions. Thus in the case of the oar, what he immediately perceives by sight is certainly crooked; and so far he is in the right. But if he thence conclude, that upon taking the oar out of the water he shall perceive the same crookedness, or that it would affect his touch as crooked things are wont to do, in that he is mistaken. In like manner, if he should conclude from what he perceives in one station, that in case he advances toward the moon or tower, he should still be affected with the like ideas, he is mistaken. But his mistake lies not in what he perceives immediately and at present (it being a manifest contradiction to

suppose he should err in respect of that), but in the wrong judgment he makes concerning the ideas he apprehends to be connected with those immediately perceived: or concerning the ideas that, from what he perceives at present, he imagines would be perceived in other circumstances. The case is the same with regard to the Copernican system. We do not here perceive any motion of the earth: but it were erroneous thence to conclude, that in case we were placed at as great a distance from that, as we are now from the other planets, we should not then perceive its motion.

Hyl. I understand you; and must needs own you say things plausible enough: but give me leave to put you in mind of one thing. Pray, Philonous, were you not formerly as positive that matter existed, as you are now that it does not?

Phil. I was. But here lies the difference. Before, my positiveness was founded without examination, upon prejudice; but now, after inquiry, upon evidence.

Hyl. After all, it seems our dispute is rather about words than things. We agree in the thing, but differ in the name. That we are affected with ideas from without is evident; and it is no less evident, that there must be (I will not say archetypes, but) powers without the mind, corresponding to those ideas. And as these powers cannot subsist by themselves, there is some subject of them necessarily to be admitted, which I call *matter*, and you call *spirit*. This is all the difference.

Phil. Pray Hylas, is that powerful being, or subject of powers, extended?

Hyl. It hath not extension; but it hath the power to raise in you the idea of extension.

Phil. It is therefore itself unextended.

Hyl. I grant it.

Phil. Is it not also active?

Hyl. Without doubt: otherwise, how could we attribute powers to it?

Phil. Now let me ask you two questions: first, whether it be agreeable to the usage either of philosophers or others, to give the name *matter* to an unextended active being? And secondly, whether it be not ridiculously absurd to misapply names contrary to the common use of language?

Hyl. Well then, let it not be called matter, since you will have it so, but some *third nature* distinct from matter and spirit. For, what reason is there why you should call it spirit? Does not the notion of spirit imply, that it is thinking as well as active and unextended?

Phil. My reason is this: because I have a mind to have some notion or meaning in what I say; but I have no notion of any action distinct from volition, neither can I conceive volition to

be any where but in a spirit; therefore when I speak of an active being, I am obliged to mean a spirit. Beside, what can be plainer than that a thing which hath no ideas in itself, cannot impart them to me; and if it hath ideas, surely it must be a spirit. To make you comprehend the point still more clearly, if it be possible: I assert as well as you, that since we are affected from without, we must allow powers to be without in a being distinct from ourselves. So far we are agreed. But then we differ as to the kind of this powerful being. I will have it to be spirit, you matter, or I know not what (I may add too, you know not what) third nature. Thus I prove it to be spirit. From the effects I see produced, I conclude there are actions; and because actions, volitions; and because there are volitions, there must be a will. Again, the things I perceive must have an existence, they or their archetypes, out of my mind: but being ideas, neither they nor their archetypes can exist otherwise than in an understanding: there is therefore an understanding. But will and understanding constitute in the strictest sense a mind or spirit. The powerful cause therefore of my ideas, is in strict propriety of speech a *spirit*.

Hyl. And now I warrant you think you have made the point very clear, little suspecting that what you advance leads directly to a contradiction. Is it not an absurdity to imagine any imperfection in God?

Phil. Without doubt.

Hyl. To suffer pain is an imperfection.

Phil. It is.

Hyl. Are we not sometimes affected with pain and uneasiness by some other being?

Phil. We are.

Hyl. And have you not said that being is a spirit, and is not that spirit God?

Phil. I grant it.

Hyl. But you have asserted, that whatever ideas we perceive from without, are in the mind which affects us. The ideas therefore of pain and uneasiness are in God; or in other words, God suffers pain: that is to say, there is an imperfection in the divine nature, which you acknowledged was absurd. So you are caught in a plain contradiction.

Phil. That God knows or understands all things, and that he knows among other things what pain is, even every sort of painful sensation, and what it is for his creatures to suffer pain, I make no question. But that God, though he knows and sometimes causes painful sensations in us, can himself suffer pain, I positively deny. We who are limited and dependent spirits, are liable to impressions of sense, the effects of an external agent, which being produced against our wills, are sometimes painful and uneasy.

But God, whom no external being can affect, who perceives nothing by sense as we do, whose will is absolute and independent, causing all things, and liable to be thwarted or resisted by nothing; it is evident, such a being as this can suffer nothing, nor be affected with any painful sensation, or indeed any sensation at all. We are chained to a body, that is to say, our perceptions are connected with corporeal motions. By the law of our nature we are affected upon every alteration in the nervous parts of our sensible body: which sensible body rightly considered, is nothing but a complexion of such qualities or ideas, as have no existence distinct from being perceived by a mind; so that this connexion of sensations with corporeal motions, means no more than a correspondence in the order of nature between two sets of ideas, or things immediately perceivable. But God is a pure spirit, disengaged from all such sympathy or natural ties. No corporeal motions are attended with the sensations of pain or pleasure in his mind. To know every thing knowable is certainly a perfection; but to endure, or suffer, or feel any thing by sense, is an imperfection. The former, I say, agrees to God, but not the latter. God knows or hath ideas: but his ideas are not conveyed to him by sense, as ours are. Your not distinguishing where there is so manifest a difference, makes you fancy you see an absurdity where there is none.

Hyl. But all this while you have not considered, that the quantity of matter hath been demonstrated to be proportioned to the gravity of bodies. And what can withstand demonstration?

Phil. Lee me see how you demonstrate that point.

Hyl. I lay it down for a principle, that the moments or quantities of motion in bodies, are in a direct compounded reason of the velocities and quantities of matter contained in them. Hence, where the velocities are equal, it follows, the moments are directly as the quantity of matter in each. But it is found by experience, that all bodies (bating the small inequalities arising from the resistance of the air) descend with an equal velocity; the motion therefore of descending bodies, and consequently their gravity, which is the cause or principle of that motion, is proportional to the quantity of matter: which was to be demonstrated.

Phil. You lay it down as a self-evident principle, that the quantity of motion in any body is proportional to the velocity and *matter* taken together: and this is made use of to prove a proposition, from whence the existence of *matter* is inferred. Pray is not this arguing in a circle?

Hyl. In the premise I only mean, that the motion is proportional to the velocity, jointly with the extension and solidity.

Phil. But allowing this to be true, yet it will not thence follow,

that gravity is proportional to *matter*, in your philosophic sense of the word; except you take it for granted, that unknown *substratum*, or whatever else you call it, is proportional to those sensible qualities; which to suppose is plainly begging the question. That there is magnitude, and solidity, or resistance, perceived by sense, I readily grant; as likewise that gravity may be proportional to those qualities, I will not dispute. But that either these qualities as perceived by us, or the powers producing them, do exist in a *material substratum;* this is what I deny, and you indeed affirm, but notwithstanding your demonstration, have not yet proved.

Hyl. I shall insist no longer on that point. Do you think, however, you shall persuade me that natural philosophers have been dreaming all this while? pray what becomes of all their hypotheses and explications of the phenomena, which suppose the existence of matter?

Phil. What mean you, Hylas, by the phenomena?

Hyl. I mean the appearances which I perceive by my senses.

Phil. And the appearances perceived by sense, are they not ideas?

Hyl. I have told you so a hundred times.

Phil. Therefore, to explain the phenomena, is to show how we come to be affected with ideas, in that manner and order wherein they are imprinted on our senses. Is it not?

Hyl. It is.

Phil. Now if you can prove, that any philosopher hath explained the production of any one idea in our minds by the help of *matter*, I shall for ever acquiesce, and look on all that hath been said against it as nothing: but if you cannot, it is in vain to urge the explication of phenomena. That a being endowed with knowledge and will, should produce or exhibit ideas, is easily understood. But that a being which is utterly destitute of these faculties should be able to produce ideas, or in any sort to affect an intelligence, this I can never understand. This I say, though we had some positive conception of matter, though we knew its qualities, and could comprehend its existence, would yet be so far from explaining things, that it is itself the most inexplicable thing in the world. And yet for all this, it will not follow, that philosophers have been doing nothing; for by observing and reasoning upon the connexion of ideas, they discover the laws and methods of nature, which is a part of knowledge both useful and entertaining.

Hyl. After all, can it be supposed God would deceive all mankind? Do you imagine, he would have induced the whole world to believe the being of matter, if there was no such thing?

Phil. That every epidemical opinion arising from prejudice, or passion, or thoughtlessness, may be imputed to God, as the

author of it, I believe you will not affirm. Whatsoever opinion we father on him, it must be either because he has discovered it to us by supernatural revelation, or because it is so evident to our natural faculties, which were framed and given us by God, that it is impossible we should withhold our assent from it. But where is the revelation, or where is the evidence that extorts the belief of matter? Nay, how does it appear that matter, taken for something distinct from what we perceive by our senses, is thought to exist by all mankind, or indeed by any except a few philosophers, who do not know what they would be at? Your question supposes these points are clear; and when you have cleared them, I shall think myself obliged to give you another answer. In the mean time let it suffice that I tell you, I do not suppose God has deceived mankind at all.

Hyl. But the novelty, Philonous, the novelty! There lies the danger. New notions should always be discountenanced; they unsettle men's minds, and nobody knows where they will end.

Phil. Why the rejecting a notion that hath no foundation either in sense, or in reason, or in divine authority, should be thought to unsettle the belief of such opinions as are grounded on all or any of these, I cannot imagine. That innovations in government and religion are dangerous, and ought to be discountenanced, I freely own. But is there the like reason why they should be discouraged in philosophy? The making any thing known which was unknown before, is an innovation in knowledge: and if all such innovations had been forbidden, men would have made a notable progress in the arts and sciences. But it is none of my business to plead for noveltics and paradoxes. That the qualities we perceive are not on the objects: that we must not believe our senses: that we know nothing of the real nature of things, and can never be assured even of their existence: that real colours and sounds are nothing but certain unknown figures and motions: that motions are in themselves neither swift nor slow: that there are in bodies absolute extensions, without any particular magnitude or figure: that a thing stupid, thoughtless, and inactive, operates on a spirit: that the least particle of a body contains innumerable extended parts. These are the novelties, these are the strange notions which shock the genuine uncorrupted judgment of all mankind; and being once admitted, embarrass the mind with endless doubts and difficulties. And it is against these and the like innovations, I endeavour to vindicate common sense. It is true, in doing this, I may perhaps be obliged to use some *ambages*, and ways of speech not common. But if my notions are once thoroughly understood, that which is most singular in them will in effect be found to amount to no more than this: that it is absolutely im-

possible, and a plain contradiction to suppose, any unthinking being should exist without being perceived by a mind. And if this notion be singular, it is a shame it should be so at this time of day, and in a Christian country.

Hyl. As for the difficulties other opinions may be liable to, those are out of the question. It is your business to defend your own opinion. Can any thing be plainer, than that you are for changing all things into ideas? You, I say, who are not ashamed to charge me with *scepticism*. This is so plain, there is no denying it.

Phil. You mistake me. I am not for changing things into ideas, but rather ideas into things; since those immediate objects of perception, which, according to you, are only appearances of things, I take to be the real things themselves.

Hyl. Things! you may pretend what you please; but it is certain, you leave us nothing but the empty forms of things, the outside only which strikes the senses.

Phil. What you call the empty forms and outside of things, seems to me the very things themselves. Nor are they empty or incomplete otherwise, than upon your supposition, that matter is an essential part of all corporeal things. We both therefore agree in this, that we perceive only sensible forms: but herein we differ, you will have them to be empty appearances, I real beings. In short you do not trust your senses, I do.

Hyl. You say you believe your senses; and seem to applaud yourself that in this you agree with the vulgar. According to you therefore, the true nature of a thing is discovered by the senses. If so, whence comes that disagreement? Why is not the same figure, and other sensible qualities, perceived all manner of ways? and why should we use a microscope, the better to discover the true nature of a body, if it were discoverable to the naked eye?

Phil. Strictly speaking, Hylas, we do not see the same object that we feel; neither is the same object perceived by the microscope, which was by the naked eye. But in case every variation was thought sufficient to constitute a new kind or individual, the endless number or confusion of names would render language impracticable. Therefore to avoid this as well as other inconveniences which are obvious upon a little thought, men combine together several ideas, apprehended by divers senses, or by the same sense at different times, or in different circumstances, but observed however to have some connexion in nature, either with respect to co-existence or succession; all which they refer to one name, and consider as one thing. Hence it follows that when I examine by my other senses a thing I have seen, it is not in order to understand better the same object which I had perceived by sight, the object of one sense not being perceived by the

other senses. And when I look through a microscope, it is not that I may perceive more clearly what I perceived already with my bare eyes, the object perceived by the glass being quite different from the former. But in both cases my aim is only to know what ideas are connected together; and the more a man knows of the connexion of ideas, the more he is said to know of the nature of things. What therefore if our ideas are variable? What if our senses are not in all circumstances affected with the same appearances? It will not thence follow, they are not to be trusted, or that they are inconsistent either with themselves or any thing else, except it be with your preconceived notion of (I know not what) one single, unchanged, unperceivable, real nature, marked by each name: which prejudice seems to have taken its rise from not rightly understanding the common language of men speaking of several distinct ideas, as united into one thing by the mind. And indeed there is cause to suspect several erroneous conceits of the philosophers are owing to the same original: while they began to build their schemes, not so much on notions as words, which were framed by the vulgar, merely for conveniency and despatch in the common actions of life, without any regard to speculation.

Hyl. Methinks I apprehend your meaning.

Phil. It is your opinion, the ideas we perceive by our senses are not real things, but images, or copies of them. Our knowledge therefore is no further real, than as our ideas are the true representations of those originals. But as these supposed originals are in themselves unknown, it is impossible to know how far our ideas resemble them; or whether they resemble them at all. We cannot therefore be sure we have any real knowledge. Further, as our ideas are perpetually varied, without any change in the supposed real things, it necessarily follows they cannot all be true copies of them; or if some are, and others are not, it is impossible to distinguish the former from the latter. And this plunges us yet deeper in uncertainty. Again, when we consider the point, we cannot conceive how any idea, or any thing like an idea, should have an absolute existence out of a mind; nor consequently, according to you, how there should be any real thing in nature. The result of all which is, that we are thrown into the most hopeless and abandoned *scepticism*. Now give me leave to ask you, first, whether your referring ideas to certain absolutely existing unperceived substances, as their originals, be not the source of all this *scepticism?* Secondly, whether you are informed, either by sense or reason, of the existence of those unknown originals? And in case you are not, whether it be not absurd to suppose them? Thirdly, whether upon inquiry, you find there is any thing distinctly conceived or meant by the *absolute or external existence of unperceiving substances?* Lastly,

whether, the premises considered, it be not the wisest way to follow nature, trust your senses, and laying aside all anxious thought about unknown natures or substances, admit with the vulgar those for real things, which are perceived by the senses?

Hyl. For the present, I have no inclination to the answering part. I would much rather see how you can get over what follows. Pray are not the objects perceived by the senses of one, likewise perceivable to others present? If there were a hundred more here, they would all see the garden, the trees, and flowers as I see them. But they are not in the same manner affected with the ideas I frame in my imagination. Does not this make a difference between the former sort of objects and the latter?

Phil. I grant it does. Nor have I ever denied a difference between the objects of sense and those of imagination. But what would you infer from thence? You cannot say that sensible objects exist unperceived, because they are perceived by many.

Hyl. I own, I can make nothing of that objection: but it hath led me into another. Is it not your opinion that by our senses we perceive only the ideas existing in our minds?

Phil. It is.

Hyl. But the same idea which is in my mind, cannot be in yours, or in any other mind. Doth it not therefore follow from your principles, that no two can see the same thing? And is not this highly absurd?

Phil. If the term *same* be taken in the vulgar acceptation, it is certain (and not at all repugnant to the principles I maintain) that different persons may perceive the same thing; or the same thing or idea exist in different minds. Words are of arbitrary imposition; and since men are used to apply the word *same* where no distinction or variety is perceived, and I do not pretend to alter their perceptions, it follows, that as men have said before, *several saw the same thing*, so they may upon like occasions still continue to use the same phrase, without any deviation either from propriety of language, or the truth of things. But if the term *same* be used in the acceptation of philosophers, who pretend to an abstracted notion of identity, then, according to their sundry definitions of this notion (for it is not yet agreed wherein that philosophic identity consists), it may or may not be possible for divers persons to perceive the same thing. But whether philosophers shall think fit to call a thing the *same* or no, is, I conceive, of small importance. Let us suppose several men together, all endued with the same faculties, and consequently affected in like sort by their senses, and who had yet never known the use of language; they would without question agree in their perceptions. Though perhaps, when they came to the use of speech, some regarding the uniformness of what was perceived,

might call it the *same* thing: others especially regarding the diversity of persons who perceived, might choose the denomination of different things. But who sees not that all the dispute is about a word; to wit, whether what is perceived by different persons, may yet have the term *same* applied to it? Or suppose a house, whose walls or outward shell remaining unaltered, the chambers are all pulled down, and new ones built in their place; and that you should call this the *same*, and I should say it was not the *same* house: would we not for all this perfectly agree in our thoughts of the house, considered in itself? And would not all the difference consist in a sound? If you should say, we differ in our notions; for that you superadded to your idea of the house the simple abstracted idea of identity, whereas I did not; I would tell you I know not what you mean by that *abstracted idea of identity;* and should desire you to look into your own thoughts, and be sure you understood yourself.——Why so silent, Hylas? Are you not yet satisfied, men may dispute about identity and diversity, without any real difference in their thoughts and opinions, abstracted from names? Take this further reflection with you: that whether matter be allowed to exist or no, the case is exactly the same as to the point in hand. For the materialists themselves acknowledge what we immediately perceive by our senses to be our own ideas. Your difficulty therefore, that no two see the same thing, makes equally against the materialists and me.

Hyl. But they suppose an external archetype, to which referring their several ideas, they may truly be said to perceive the same thing.

Phil. And (not to mention your having discovered those archetypes) so may you suppose an external archetype on my principles: *external*, I mean, to your own mind; though indeed it must be supposed to exist in that mind which comprehends all things; but then this serves all the ends of identity, as well as if it existed out of a mind. And I am sure you yourself will not say, it is less intelligible.

Hyl. You have indeed clearly satisfied me, either that there is no difficulty at bottom in this point; or if there be, that it makes equally against both opinions.

Phil. But that which makes equally against two contradictory opinions, can be a proof against neither.

Hyl. I acknowledge it. But after all, Philonous, when I consider the substance of what you advance against scepticism, it amounts to no more than this. We are sure that we really see, hear, feel; in a word, that we are affected with sensible impressions.

Phil. And how are we concerned any further? I see this *cherry*, I feel it, I taste it: and I am sure *nothing* cannot be seen,

or felt, or tasted: it is therefore *real*. Take away the sensations of softness, moisture, redness, tartness, and you take away the *cherry*. Since it is not a being distinct from sensations; a *cherry*, I say, is nothing but a congeries of sensible impressions, or ideas perceived by various senses; which ideas are united into one thing (or have one name given them) by the mind; because they are observed to attend each other. Thus when the palate is affected with such a particular taste, the sight is affected with a red colour, the touch with roundness, softness, &c. Hence, when I see, and feel, and taste, in sundry certain manners, I am sure the *cherry* exists, or is real; its reality being in my opinion nothing abstracted from those sensations. But if by the word *cherry* you mean an unknown nature distinct from all those sensible qualities, and by its existence something distinct from its being perceived; then indeed I own, neither you, nor I, nor any one else can be sure it exists.

Hyl. But what would you say, Philonous, if I should bring the very same reasons against the existence of sensible things in a mind, which you have offered against their existing in a material *substratum?*

Phil. When I see your reasons, you shall hear what I have to say to them.

Hyl. Is the mind extended or unextended?

Phil. Unextended, without doubt.

Hyl. Do you say the things you perceive are in your mind?

Phil. They are.

Hyl. Again, have I not heard you speak of sensible impressions?

Phil. I believe you may.

Hyl. Explain to me now, O Philonous! how it is possible there should be room for all those trees and houses to exist in your mind. Can extended things be contained in that which is unextended? or are we to imagine impressions made on a thing void of all solidity? You cannot say objects are in your mind, as books in your study: or that things are imprinted on it, as the figure of a seal upon wax. In what sense therefore are we to understand those expressions? Explain me this if you can: and I shall then be able to answer all those queries you formerly put to me about my substratum.

Phil. Look you, Hylas, when I speak of objects as existing in the mind or imprinted on the senses, I would not be understood in the gross literal sense, as when bodies are said to exist in a place, or a seal to make an impression upon wax. My meaning is only that the mind comprehends or perceives them; and that it is affected from without, or by some being distinct from itself. This is my explication of your difficulty; and how it can serve to make your tenet of an unperceiving material substratum intelligible, I would fain know.

Hyl. Nay, if that be all, I confess I do not see what use can be made of it. But are you not guilty of some abuse of language in this?

Phil. None at all: it is no more than common custom, which you know is the rule of language, hath authorized: nothing being more usual, than for philosophers to speak of the immediate objects of the understanding as things existing in the mind. Nor is there any thing in this, but what is conformable to the general analogy of language; most part of the mental operations being signified by words borrowed from sensible things; as is plain in the terms *comprehend, reflect, discourse,* &c., which being applied to the mind, must not be taken in their gross original sense.

END

Hyl. You have, I own, satisfied me in this point; but there still remains one great difficulty, which I know not how you will get over. And, indeed, it is of such importance, that if you could solve all others, without being able to find a solution for this, you must never expect to make me a proselyte to your principles.

Phil. Let me know this mighty difficulty.

Hyl. The scripture account of the creation is what appears to me utterly irreconcilable with your notions. Moses tells us of a creation: a creation of what? of ideas? No, certainly, but of things, of real things, solid corporeal substances. Bring your principles to agree with this, and I shall perhaps agree with you.

Phil. Moses mentions the sun, moon, and stars, earth and sea, plants and animals: that all these do really exist, and were in the beginning created by God, I make no question. If by *ideas* you mean fictions and fancies of the mind, then these are no ideas. If by *ideas* you mean immediate objects of the understanding, or sensible things which cannot exist unperceived, or out of a mind, then these things are ideas. But whether you do or do not call them *ideas,* it matters little. The difference is only about a name. And whether that name be retained or rejected, the sense, the truth, and reality of things continues the same. In common talk, the objects of our senses are not termed *ideas,* but *things.* Call them so still; provided you do not attribute to them any absolute external existence, and I shall never quarrel with you for a word. The creation, therefore, I allow to have been a creation of things, of *real* things. Neither is this in the least inconsistent with my principles, as is evident from what I have now said; and would have been evident to you without this, if you had not forgotten what had been so often said before. But as for solid corporeal substances, I desire you to show where Moses makes any mention of them; and if they should be mentioned by him, or any other inspired writer, it would still be incumbent on you to show those words were not taken in the vulgar acceptation, for things falling under our

senses, but in the philosophic acceptation, for matter, or an unknown quiddity, with an absolute existence. When you have proved these points, then (and not till then) may you bring the authority of Moses into our dispute.

Hyl. It is in vain to dispute about a point so clear. I am content to refer it to your own conscience. Are you not satisfied there is some peculiar repugnancy between the Mosaic account of the creation and your notions?

Phil. If all possible sense, which can be put on the first chapter of Genesis, may be conceived as consistently with my principles as any other, then it has no peculiar repugnancy with them. But there is no sense you may not as well conceive, believing as I do. Since, beside spirits, all you conceive are ideas, and the existence of these I do not deny. Neither do you pretend they exist without the mind.

Hyl. Pray let me see any sense you can understand it in.

Phil. Why I imagine that if I had been present at the creation, I should have seen things produced into being; that is, become perceptible, in the order described by the sacred historian. I ever before believed the Mosaic account of the creation, and now find no alteration in my manner of believing it. When things are said to begin or end their existence, we do not mean this with regard to God, but his creatures. All objects are eternally known by God, or which is the same thing, have an eternal existence in his mind: but when things before imperceptible to creatures, are by a decree of God, made perceptible to them; then are they said to begin a relative existence with respect to created minds. Upon reading therefore the Mosaic account of the creation, I understand that the several parts of the world became gradually perceivable to finite spirits, endowed with proper faculties; so that, whoever such were present, they were in truth perceived by them. This is the literal, obvious sense suggested to me by the words of the holy scripture: in which is included no mention or no thought, either of substratum, instrument, occasion, or absolute existence. And upon inquiry, I doubt not it will be found, that most plain, honest men, who believe the creation, never think of those things any more than I. What metaphysical sense you may understand it in, you only can tell.

Hyl. But, Philonous, you do not seem to be aware, that you allow created things in the beginning only a relative, and, consequently, hypothetical being: that is to say, upon supposition there were men to perceive them, without which they have no actuality of absolute existence, wherein creation might terminate. Is it not, therefore, according to you plainly impossible, the creation of any inanimate creatures should precede that of man? And is not this directly contrary to the Mosaic account?

Phil. In answer to that I say, first, created beings might begin to exist in the mind of other created intelligences, beside men. You will not therefore be able to prove any contradiction between Moses and my notions, unless you first show, there was no other order of finite created spirits in being before man. I say further, in case we conceive the creation, as we should at this time a parcel of plants or vegetables of all sorts, produced by an invisible power, in a desert where nobody was present: that this way of explaining or conceiving it, is consistent with my principles, since they deprive you of nothing, either sensible or imaginable: that it exactly suits with the common, natural, undebauched notions of mankind: that it manifests the dependence of all things on God; and consequently hath all the good effect or influence, which it is possible that important article of our faith should have in making men humble, thankful, and resigned to their Creator. I say moreover, that in this naked conception of things, divested of words, there will not be found any notion of what you call the *actuality of absolute existence.* You may indeed raise a dust with those terms, and so lengthen our dispute to no purpose. But I entreat you calmly to look into your own thoughts, and then tell me if they are not a useless and unintelligible jargon.

Hyl. I own I have no very clear notion annexed to them. But what say you to this? Do you not make the existence of sensible things consist in their being in a mind? and were not all things eternally in the mind of God? Did they not therefore exist from all eternity, according to you? And how could that which was eternal be created in time? Can any thing be clearer or better connected than this?

Phil. And are not you too of opinion, that God knew all things from eternity?

Hyl. I am.

Phil. Consequently they always had a being in the divine intellect.

Hyl. This I acknowledge.

Phil. By your own confession therefore, nothing is new, or begins to be, in respect of the mind of God. So we are agreed in that point.

Hyl. What shall we make then of the creation?

Phil. May we not understand it to have been entirely in respect of finite spirits; so that things, with regard to us, may properly be said to begin their existence, or be created, when God decreed they should become perceptible to intelligent creatures, in that order and manner which he then established, and we now call the laws of nature? You may call this a *relative,* or *hypothetical existence* if you please. But so long as it supplies us with the most natural, obvious, and literal sense of the Mosaic

history of the creation; so long as it answers all the religious ends of that great article; in a word, so long as you can assign no other sense or meaning in its stead; why should we reject this? Is it to comply with a ridiculous sceptical humour of making every thing nonsense and unintelligible? I am sure you cannot say it is for the glory of God. For allowing it to be a thing possible and conceivable, that the corporeal world should have an absolute subsistence extrinsical to the mind of God, as well as to the minds of all created spirits: yet how could this set forth either the immensity or omniscience of the Deity, or the necessary and immediate dependence of all things on him? Nay, would it not rather seem to derogate from those attributes?

Hyl. Well, but as to this decree of God's, for making things perceptible: what say you, Philonous, is it not plain, God did either execute that decree from all eternity, or at some certain time began to will what he had not actually willed before, but only designed to will? If the former, then there could be no creation or beginning of existence in finite things. If the latter, then we must acknowledge something new to befall the Deity; which implies a sort of change; and all change argues imperfection.

Phil. Pray consider what you are doing. Is it not evident, this objection concludes equally against a creation in any sense; nay, against every other act of the Deity, discoverable by the light of nature? None of which can we conceive, otherwise than as performed in time, and having a beginning. God is a being of transcendent and unlimited perfections: his nature therefore is incomprehensible to finite spirits. It is not therefore to be expected, that any man, whether *materialist* or *immaterialist*, should have exactly just notions of the Deity, his attributes, and ways of operation. If then you would infer any thing against me, your difficulty must not be drawn from the inadequateness of our conceptions of the divine nature, which is unavoidable on any scheme: but from the denial of matter, of which there is not one word, directly or indirectly, in what you have now objected.

Hyl. I must acknowledge the difficulties you are concerned to clear, are such only as arise from the non-existence of matter, and are peculiar to that notion. So far you are in the right. But I cannot by any means bring myself to think there is no such peculiar repugnancy between the creation and your opinion; though indeed where to fix it, I do not distinctly know.

Phil. What would you have? Do I not acknowledge a twofold state of things, the one ectypal or natural, the other archetypal and eternal? The former was created in time; the latter existed from everlasting in the mind of God. Is not this agreeable to

the common notions of divines? or is any more than this necessary in order to conceive the creation? But you suspect some peculiar repugnancy, though you know not where it lies. To take away all possibility of scruple in the case, do but consider this one point. Either you are not able to conceive the creation on any hypothesis whatsoever; and if so, there is no ground for dislike or complaint against my particular opinion on that score: or you are able to conceive it; and if so, why not on my principles, since thereby nothing conceivable is taken away? You have all along been allowed the full scope of sense, imagination, and reason. Whatever therefore you could before apprehend, either immediately or mediately by your senses, or by ratiocination from your senses; whatever you could perceive, imagine, or understand, remains still with you. If therefore the notion you have of the creation by other principles be intelligible, you have it still upon mine; if it be not intelligible, I conceive it to be no notion at all; and so there is no loss of it. And indeed it seems to me very plain, that the supposition of matter, that is, a thing perfectly unknown and inconceivable, cannot serve to make us conceive any thing. And I hope, it need not be proved to you, that if the existence of matter doth not make the creation conceivable, the creation's being without it inconceivable, can be no objection against its non-existence.

Hyl. I confess, Philonous, you have almost satisfied me in this point of the creation.

Phil. I would fain know why you are not quite satisfied. You tell me indeed of a repugnancy between the Mosaic history and immaterialism: but you know not where it lies. Is this reasonable, Hylas? Can you expect I should solve a difficulty without knowing what it is? But to pass by all that, would not a man think you were assured there is no repugnancy between the received notions of materialists and the inspired writings?

Hyl. And so I am.

Phil. Ought the historical part of scripture to be understood in a plain, obvious sense, or in a sense which is metaphysical and out of the way?

Hyl. In the plain sense, doubtless.

Phil. When Moses speaks of herbs, earth, water, &c., as having been created by God; think you not the sensible things, commonly signified by those words, are suggested to every unphilosophical reader?

Hyl. I cannot help thinking so.

Phil. And are not all ideas, or things perceived by sense, to be denied a real existence by the doctrine of the materialists?

Hyl. This I have already acknowledged.

Phil. The creation therefore, according to them, was not the creation of things sensible, which have only a relative being, but

of certain unknown natures, which have an absolute being, wherein creation might terminate.

Hyl. True.

Phil. Is it not therefore evident, the asserters of matter destroy the plain obvious sense of Moses, with which their notions are utterly inconsistent; and instead of it obtrude on us I know not what, something equally unintelligible to themselves and me.

Hyl. I cannot contradict you.

Phil. Moses tells us of a creation. A creation of what? of unknown quiddities, of occasions, or substratums? No, certainly; but of things obvious to the senses. You must first reconcile this with your notions, if you expect I should be reconciled to them.

Hyl. I see you can assault me with my own weapons.

Phil. Then as to *absolute existence;* was there ever known a more jejune notion than that? Something it is, so abstracted and unintelligible, that you have frankly owned you could not conceive it, much less explain any thing by it. But allowing matter to exist, and the notion of absolute existence to be as clear as light, yet was this ever known to make the creation more credible? Nay, hath it not furnished the atheists and infidels of all ages with the most plausible argument against a creation? That a corporeal substance, which hath an absolute existence without the minds of spirits, should be produced out of nothing by the mere will of a spirit, hath been looked upon as a thing so contrary to all reason, so impossible and absurd, that not only the most celebrated among the ancients, but even divers modern and Christian philosophers, have thought matter co-eternal with the Deity. Lay these things together, and then judge you whether materialism disposes men to believe the creation of things.

Hyl. I own, Philonous, I think it does not. This of the *creation* is the last objection I can think of; and I must needs own it hath been sufficiently answered as well as the rest. Nothing now remains to be overcome, but a sort of unaccountable backwardness that I find in myself toward your notions.

Phil. When a man is swayed, he knows not why, to one side of a question, can this, think you, be any thing else but the effect of prejudice, which never fails to attend old and rooted notions? And indeed in this respect I cannot deny the belief of matter to have very much the advantage over the contrary opinion, with men of a learned education.

Hyl. I confess it seems to be as you say.

Phil. As a balance therefore to this weight of prejudice, let us throw into the scale the great advantages that arise from the belief of immaterialism, both in regard to religion and human learning. The being of a God, and incorruptibility of the soul,

those great articles of religion, are they not proved with the clearest and most immediate evidence? When I say the being of a *God*, I do not mean an obscure, general cause of things, whereof we have no conception, but *God*, in the strict and proper sense of the word. A being whose spirituality, omnipresence, providence, omniscience, infinite power, and goodness, are as conspicuous as the existence of sensible things, of which (notwithstanding the fallacious pretences and affected scruples of sceptics) there is no more reason to doubt than of our own being. Then with relation to human sciences; in natural philosophy, what intricacies, what obscurities, what contradictions, hath the belief of matter led men into! To say nothing of the numberless disputes about its extent, continuity, homogenity, gravity, divisibility, &c., do they not pretend to explain all things by bodies operating on bodies, according to the laws of motion? and yet, are they able to comprehend how any one body should move another? Nay, admitting there was no difficulty in reconciling the notion of an inert being with a cause; or in conceiving how an accident might pass from one body to another; yet by all their strained thoughts and extravagant suppositions, have they been able to reach the mechanical production of any one animal or vegetable body? Can they account by the laws of motion, for sounds, tastes, smells, or colours, or for the regular course of things? Have they accounted by physical principles for the aptitude and contrivance, even of the most inconsiderable parts of the universe? But laying aside matter and corporeal causes, and admitting only the efficiency of an all-perfect mind, are not all the effects of nature easy and intelligible? If the phenomena are nothing else but *ideas*; God is a *spirit*, but matter an unintelligent, unperceiving being. If they demonstrate an unlimited power in their cause; God is active and omnipotent, but matter an inert mass. If the order, regularity, and usefulness of them can never be sufficiently admired; God is infinitely wise and provident, but matter destitute of all contrivance and design. These surely are great advantages in *physics*. Not to mention that the apprehension of a distant Deity naturally disposes men to a negligence in their *moral* actions, which they would be more cautious of in case they thought him immediately present, and acting on their minds without the interposition of matter, or unthinking second causes. Then in *metaphysics*; what difficulties concerning entity in abstract, substantial forms, hylarchic principles, plastic natures, substance and accident, principle of individuation, possibility of matter's thinking, origin of ideas, the manner how two independent substances, so widely different as *spirit* and *matter*, should mutually operate on each other! what difficulties, I say, and endless disquisitions concerning these and innumerable other the like points, do we escape by supposing only spirits and ideas? Even the *mathematics* themselves, if we

take away the absolute existence of extended things, become much more clear and easy; the most shocking paradoxes and intricate speculations in those sciences, depending on the infinite divisibility of finite extension, which depends on that supposition. But what need is there to insist on the particular sciences? Is not that opposition to all science whatsoever, that frenzy of the ancient and modern sceptics, built on the same foundation? Or can you produce so much as one argument against the reality of corporeal things, or in behalf of that avowed utter ignorance of their natures, which doth not suppose their reality to consist in an external absolute existence? Upon this supposition indeed, the objections from the change of colours in a pigeon's neck, or the appearances of a broken oar in the water, must be allowed to have weight. But those and the like objections vanish, if we do not maintain the being of absolute external originals, but place the reality of things in ideas, fleeting indeed, and changeable; however not changed at random, but according to the fixed order of nature. For herein consists that constancy and truth of things, which secures all the concerns of life, and distinguishes that which is *real* from the irregular visions of the fancy.

Hyl. I agree to all you have now said, and must own that nothing can incline me to embrace your opinion, more than the advantages I see it is attended with. I am by nature lazy, and this would be a mighty abridgment in knowledge. What doubts, what hypotheses, what labyrinths of amusement, what fields of disputation, what an ocean of false learning, may be avoided by that single notion of *immaterialism!*

Phil. After all, is there any thing further remaining to be done? You may remember you promised to embrace that opinion which upon examination should appear most agreeable to common sense, and remote from scepticism. This, by your own confession, is that which denies matter, or the absolute existence of corporeal things. Nor is this all; the same notion has been proved several ways, viewed in different lights, pursued in its consequences, and all objections against it cleared. Can there be a greater evidence of its truth? or is it possible it should have all the marks of a true opinion, and yet be false?

Hyl. I own myself entirely satisfied for the present in all respects. But what security can I have that I shall still continue the same full assent to your opinion, and that no unthought-of objection or difficulty will occur hereafter?

Phil. Pray, Hylas, do you in other cases, when a point is once evidently proved, withhold your assent on account of objections or difficulties it may be liable to? Are the difficulties that attend the doctrine of incommensurable quantities, of the angle of contact, of the asymptotes to curves, or the like, sufficient to make you hold out against mathematical demonstration? Or will you dis-

believe the providence of God, because there may be some particular things which you know not how to reconcile with it? If there are difficulties attending immaterialism, there are at the same time direct and evident proofs for it. But for the existence of matter there is not one proof, and far more numerous and insurmountable objections lie against it. But where are those mighty difficulties you insist on? Alas! you know not where or what they are; something which may possibly occur hereafter. If this be a sufficient pretence for withholding your full assent, you should never yield it to any proposition, how free soever from exceptions, how clearly and solidly soever demonstrated.

Hyl. You have satisfied me, Philonous.

Phil. But to arm you against all future objections, do but consider, that which bears equally hard on two contradictory opinions, can be a proof against neither. Whenever therefore any difficulty occurs, try if you can find a solution for it on the hypothesis of the *materialists*. Be not deceived by words; but sound your own thoughts. And in case you cannot conceive it easier by the help of *materialism*, it is plain it can be no objection against *immaterialism*. Had you proceeded all along by this rule, you would probably have spared yourself abundance of trouble in objecting; since of all your difficulties I challenge you to show one that is explained by matter; nay, which is not more unintelligible with, than without that supposition, and consequently makes rather *against* than *for* it. You should consider in each particular, whether the difficulty arises from the *non-existence of matter*. If it doth not, you might as well argue from the infinite divisibility of extension against the divine prescience, as from such a difficulty against *immaterialism*. And yet upon recollection I believe you will find this to have been often, if not always the case. You should likewise take heed not to argue on a *petitio principii*. One is apt to say, the unknown substances ought to be esteemed real things, rather than the ideas in our minds: and who can tell but the unthinking external substance may concur as a cause or instrument in the production of our ideas? But is not this proceeding on a supposition that there are such external substances? And to suppose this, is it not begging the question? But above all things you should beware of imposing on yourself by that vulgar sophism, which is called *ignoratio elenchi*. You talked often as if you thought I maintained the non-existence of sensible things: whereas in truth no one can be more thoroughly assured of their existence than I am, and it is you who doubt; I should have said, positively deny it. Every thing that is seen, felt, heard, or any way perceived by the senses, is, on the principles I embrace, a real being, but not on yours. Remember the matter you contend for is an unknown somewhat (if indeed it may be termed *somewhat*), which is quite

stripped of all sensible qualities, and can neither be perceived by sense, nor apprehended by the mind. Remember, I say, that it is not any object which is hard or soft, hot or cold, blue or white, round or square, &c. For all these things I affirm do exist. Though indeed I deny they have any existence distinct from being perceived; or that they exist out of all minds whatsoever. Think on these points; let them be attentively considered and still kept in view. Otherwise you will not comprehend the state of the question; without which your objections will always be wide of the mark, and instead of mine, may possibly be directed (as more than once they have been) against your own notions.

Hyl. I must needs own, Philonous, nothing seems to have kept me from agreeing with you more than this same *mistaking the question.* In denying matter, at first glimpse I am tempted to imagine you deny the things we see and feel; but upon reflection find there is no ground for it. What think you therefore of retaining the name *matter*, and applying it to sensible things? This may be done without any change in your sentiments: and believe me it would be a means of reconciling them to some persons, who may be more shocked at an innovation in words than in opinion.

Phil. With all my heart: retain the word *matter*, and apply it to the objects of sense, if you please, provided you do not attribute to them any subsistence distinct from their being perceived. I shall never quarrel with you for an expression. *Matter*, or *material substance*, are terms introduced by philosophers; and as used by them, imply a sort of independency, or a subsistence distinct from being perceived by a mind: but are never used by common people; or if ever, it is to signify the immediate objects of sense. One would think therefore, so long as the names of all particular things, with the terms *sensible, substance, body, stuff*, and the like, are retained, the word *matter* should be never missed in common talk. And in philosophical discourses it seems the best way to leave it quite out; since there is not perhaps any one thing that hath more favoured and strengthened the depraved bent of the mind toward *atheism*, than the use of that general confused term.

Hyl. Well but, Philonous, since I am content to give up the notion of an unthinking substance exterior to the mind, I think you ought not to deny me the privilege of using the word *matter* as I please, and annexing it to a collection of sensible qualities subsisting only in the mind. I freely own there is no other substance in a strict sense, than *spirit*. But I have been so long accustomed to the term *matter*, that I know not how to part with it. To say, there is no *matter* in the world, is still shocking to me. Whereas to say, there is no *matter*, if by that term be meant an unthinking substance existing without the mind; but if

by matter is meant some sensible thing, whose existence consists in being perceived, then there is *matter:* this distinction gives it quite another turn: and men will come into your notions with small difficulty, when they are proposed in that manner. For after all, the controversy about matter, in the strict acceptation of it, lies altogether between you and the philosophers, whose principles, I acknowledge, are not near so natural, or so agreeable to the common sense of mankind, and holy scripture, as yours. There is nothing we either desire or shun, but as it makes, or is apprehended to make some part of our happiness or misery. But what hath happiness or misery, joy or grief, pleasure or pain, to do with absolute existence, or with unknown entities, abstracted from all relation to us? It is evident, things regard us only as they are pleasing or displeasing: and they can please or displease only so far forth as they perceived. Further therefore we are not concerned; and thus far you leave things as you found them. Yet still there is something new in this doctrine. It is plain, I do not now think with the philosophers, nor yet altogether with the vulgar. I would know how the case stands in that respect: precisely, what you have added to, or altered in my former notions.

Phil. I do not pretend to be a setter-up of *new notions.* My endeavours tend only to unite and place in a clearer light that truth, which was before shared between the vulgar and the philosophers: the former being of opinion, that *those things they immediately perceive are the real things:* and the latter, that *the things immediately perceived are ideas which exist only in the mind.* Which two notions put together, do in effect constitute the substance of what I advance.

Hyl. I have been a long time distrusting my senses; methought I saw things by a dim light, and through false glasses. Now the glasses are removed, and a new light breaks in upon my understanding. I am clearly convinced that I see things in their native forms; and am no longer in pain about their unknown natures or absolute existence. This is the state I find myself in at present: though indeed the course that brought me to it I do not yet thoroughly comprehend. You set out upon the same principles that Academics, Cartesians, and the like sects, usually do; and for a long time it looked as if you were advancing their philosophical scepticism; but in the end your conclusions are directly opposite to theirs.

Phil. You see, Hylas, the water of yonder fountain, how it is forced upwards, in a round column, to a certain height; at which it breaks and falls back into the bason from whence it rose: its ascent, as well as descent, proceeding from the same uniform law or principle of *gravitation.* Just so, the same principles which at first view lead to scepticism, pursued to a certain point, bring men back to common sense.

AN ESSAY

TOWARDS

A NEW THEORY OF VISION.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

SIR JOHN PERCIVALE, BART.,

ONE OF HER MAJESTY'S MOST HONOURABLE PRIVY COUNCIL IN THE KINGDOM OF IRELAND.

SIR,

I COULD not, without doing violence to myself, forbear upon this occasion to give some public testimony of the great and well-grounded esteem I have conceived for you, ever since I had the honour and happiness of your acquaintance. The outward advantages of fortune, and the early honours with which you are adorned, together with the reputation you are known to have, amongst the best and most considerable men, may well imprint veneration and esteem on the minds of those who behold you from a distance. But these are not the chief motives that inspire me with the respect I bear you. A nearer approach has given me the view of something in your person, infinitely beyond the external ornaments of honour and estate. I mean, an intrinsic stock of virtue and good sense, a true concern for religion, and disinterested love of your country. Add to these an uncommon proficiency in the best and most useful parts of knowledge; together with (what in my mind is a perfection of the first rank) a surpassing goodness of nature. All which I have collected, not from the uncertain reports of fame, but from my own experience. Within these few months, that I have the honour to be known unto you, the many delightful hours I have passed in your agreeable and improving conversation, have afforded me the opportunity of discovering in you many excellent qualities, which at once fill me with admiration and esteem. That one at those years, and in those circumstances of wealth and greatness, should continue proof against the charms of luxury, and those criminal pleasures, so fashionable and predominant in the age we live in. That he should preserve a sweet and modest behaviour, free from that insolent and assuming air, so familiar to those who are placed above the ordinary rank of men. That he should manage a great fortune with that prudence and inspection, and at the same time expend it with that generosity and nobleness of mind, as to show himself equally remote from a sordid parsimony, and a lavish, inconsiderate profusion of the good things he is entrusted with. This, surely, were admirable and praiseworthy. But that he should moreover, by an impartial exercise of his reason, and constant perusal of the sacred scriptures, endeavour to attain a right notion of the principles of natural and revealed religion. That he should with the concern of a true patriot have the interest of the public at heart, and omit no means of informing himself what may be prejudicial or advantageous to his country, in order to prevent the one, and promote the other. In fine, that by a constant application to the most severe and useful studies, by a strict observation of the rules of honour and virtue, by frequent and

serious reflections on the mistaken measures of the world, and the true end and happiness of mankind, he should in all respects qualify himself bravely to run the race that is set before him, to deserve the character of *great* and *good* in this life, and be ever happy hereafter. This were amazing, and almost incredible. Yet all this, and more than this, Sir, might I justly say of you; did either your modesty permit, or your character stand in need of it. I know it might deservedly be thought a vanity in me, to imagine that any thing coming from so obscure a hand as mine, could add a lustre to your reputation. But I am withal sensible how far I advance the interest of my own, by laying hold on this opportunity to make it known that I am admitted into some degree of intimacy with a person of your exquisite judgment. And with that view, I have ventured to make you an address of this nature, which the goodness I have ever experienced in you inclines me to hope, will meet with a favourable reception at your hands. Though I must own, I have your pardon to ask, for touching on what may, possibly, be offensive to a virtue you are possessed of in a very distinguishing degree. Excuse me, Sir, if it was out of my power to mention the name of Sir John Percivale without paying some tribute to that extraordinary and surprising merit, whereof I have so lively and affecting an idea, and which, I am sure, cannot be exposed in too full a light for the imitation of others. Of late, I have been agreeably employed in considering the most noble, pleasant, and comprehensive of all the senses. The fruit of that (labour shall I call it or) diversion is what I now present you with, in hopes it may give some entertainment to one who, in the midst of business and vulgar enjoyments, preserves a relish for the more refined pleasures of thought and reflection. My thoughts concerning vision have led me into some notions, so far out of the common road, that it had been improper to address them to one of a narrow and contracted genius. But you, Sir, being master of a large and free understanding, raised above the power of those prejudices that enslave the far greater part of mankind, may deservedly be thought a proper patron for an attempt of this kind. Add to this, that you are no less disposed to forgive, than qualified to discern, whatever faults may occur in it. Nor do I think you defective in any one point necessary to form an exact judgment on the most abstract and difficult things, so much as in a just confidence of your own abilities. And in this one instance, give me leave to say, you show a manifest weakness of judgment. With relation to the following essay, I shall only add, that I beg your pardon for laying a trifle of that nature in your way, at a time when you are engaged in the important affairs of the nation, and desire you to think, that I am with all sincerity and respect,

SIR,

Your most faithful and most humble servant,

GEORGE BERKELEY.

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CX. One born blind would not at first sight number visible things as others do.
CXI. The situation of any object determined with respect only to objects of the same sense.
CXII. No distance, great or small, between a visible and tangible thing.
CXIII. The not observing this, cause of difficulty in erect vision.
CXIV. Which otherwise includes nothing unaccountable.
CXV. What is meant by the picture being inverted.
CXVI. Cause of mistake in this matter.
CXVII. Images in the eye, not pictures of external objects.
CXVIII. In what sense they are pictures.
CXIX. In this affair we must carefully distinguish between ideas of sight and touch.
CXX. Difficult to explain by words the true Theory of Vision.
CXXI. The question, whether there is any *idea* common to sight and touch, stated.
CXXII. Abstract extension inquired into.

Sect.
CXXIII. It is incomprehensible.
CXXIV. Abstract extension not the *object* of geometry.
CXXV. The general *idea* of a triangle, considered.
CXXVI. Vacuum, or pure space, not common to sight and touch.
CXXVII. There is no idea, or kind of idea, common to both senses.
CXXVIII. First argument in proof hereof.
CXXIX. Second argument.
CXXX. Visible figure and extension, not distinct *ideas* from colour.
CXXXI. Third argument.
CXXXII. Confirmation drawn from Mr. Molyneux's problem of a sphere and a cube, published by Mr. Locke.
CXXXIII. Which is falsely solved, if the common supposition be true.
CXXXIV. More might be said in proof of our tenet, but this suffices.
CXXXV. Further reflection on the foregoing problem.
CXXXVI. The same thing doth not affect both sight and touch.
CXXXVII. The same idea of motion not common to sight and touch.
CXXXVIII. The way wherein we apprehend motion by sight, easily collected from what hath been said.
CXXXIX. *Qu.* How visible and tangible *ideas* came to have the same name if not of the same kind.
CXL. This accounted for without supposing them of the same kind.
CXLI. *Obj.* That a tangible square is liker to a visible square than to a visible circle.
CXLII. *Ans.* That a visible square is fitter than a visible circle, to represent a tangible square.
CXLIII. But it doth not hence follow, that a visible square is like a tangible square.
CXLIV. Why we are more apt to confound visible with tangible *ideas*, than other signs with the things signified.
CXLV. Several other reasons hereof, assigned.
CXLVI. Reluctancy in rejecting any opinion, no argument of its truth.
CXLVII. Proper objects of vision the language of nature.
CXLVIII. In it there is much admirable, and deserving our attention.
CXLIX. Question proposed, concerning the object of geometry.
CL. At first view we are apt to think visible extension the object of geometry.
CLI. Visible extension shown not to be the object of geometry.
CLII. Words may as well be thought the object of geometry, as visible extension.
CLIII. It is proposed to inquire, what progress an intelligence that could see, but not feel, might make in geometry.
CLIV. He cannot understand those parts which relate to solids, and their surfaces, and lines generated by their section.
CLV. Nor even the elements of plane geometry.
CLVI. The proper objects of sight incapable of being managed as geometrical figures.
CLVII. The opinion of those who hold plane figures to be the immediate objects of sight, considered.
CLVIII. Planes no more the immediate objects of sight, than solids.
CLIX. Difficult to enter precisely into the thoughts of the above-mentioned intelligence.
CLX. The object of geometry, its not being sufficiently understood, cause of difficulty, and useless labour in that science.

AN ESSAY

TOWARDS

A NEW THEORY OF VISION.

I. My design is to show the manner wherein we perceive by sight, the distance, magnitude, and situation of *objects*. Also to consider the difference there is betwixt the *ideas* of sight and touch, and whether there be any *idea* common to both senses. In treating of all which, it seems to me, the writers of optics have proceeded on wrong principles.

II. It is, I think, agreed by all, that *distance* of itself, and immediately, cannot be seen. For *distance* being a line directed end-wise to the eye, it projects only one point in the fund of the eye. Which point remains invariably the same, whether the distance be longer or shorter.

III. I find it also acknowledged, that the estimate we make of the distance of *objects* considerably remote, is rather an act of judgment grounded on *experience* than of *sense*. For example, when I perceive a great number of intermediate *objects*, such as houses, fields, rivers, and the like, which I have experienced to take up a considerable space; I thence form a judgment or conclusion, that the *object* I see beyond them is at a great distance. Again, when an *object* appears faint and small, which, at a near distance, I have experienced to make a vigorous and large appearance; I instantly conclude it to be far off. And this, it is evident, is the result of *experience;* without which, from the faintness and littleness, I should not have inferred any thing concerning the distance of *objects*.

IV. But when an *object* is placed at so near a distance, as that the interval between the eyes bears any sensible proportion to it, it is the received opinion that the two *optic axes* (the fancy that we see only with one eye at once being exploded) concurring at the *object*, do there make an *angle*, by means of which, according as it is greater or lesser, the *object* is perceived to be nearer or further off.

V. Betwixt which, and the foregoing manner of estimating distance, there is this remarkable difference. That whereas there was no apparent, necessary connexion between small dis-

tance and a large and strong appearance, or between great distance, and a little and faint appearance. Yet there appears a very necessary connexion between an obtuse angle and near distance, and an acute angle and further distance. It does not in the least depend upon experience, but may be evidently known by any one before he had experienced it, that the nearer the concurrence of the *optic axes*, the greater the *angle*, and the remoter their concurrence is, the lesser will be the *angle* comprehended by them.

VI. There is another way, mentioned by the optic writers, whereby they will have us judge of those distances, in respect of which, the breadth of the *pupil* hath any sensible bigness. And that is the greater or lesser divergency of the rays, which, issuing from the visible point, do fall on the *pupil:* that point being judged nearest, which is seen by most diverging rays; and that remoter, which is seen by less diverging rays. And so on, the apparent distance still increasing, as the divergency of the rays decreases, till at length it becomes infinite, when the rays that fall on the *pupil* are to sense parallel. And after this manner it is said we perceive distances when we look only with one eye.

VII. In this case also, it is plain we are not beholding to experience: it being a certain, necessary truth, that the nearer the direct rays falling on the eye approach to a *parallelism*, the further off is the point of their intersection, or the visible point from whence they flow.

VIII. I have here set down the common, current accounts that are given of our perceiving near distances by sight, which, though they are unquestionably received for true by *mathematicians*, and accordingly made use of by them in determining the apparent places of *objects*, do, nevertheless, seem to me very unsatisfactory: and that for these following reasons:—

IX. *First*, It is evident that when the mind perceives any *idea*, not immediately and of itself; it must be by the means of some other *idea*. Thus, for instance, the passions which are in the mind of another, are of themselves to me invisible. I may nevertheless perceive them by sight, though not immediately, yet by means of the colours they produce in the countenance. We do often see shame or fear in the looks of a man, by perceiving the changes of his countenance to red or pale.

X. Moreover it is evident, that no *idea* which is not itself perceived, can be to me the means of perceiving any other *idea*. If I do not perceive the redness or paleness of a man's face themselves, it is impossible I should perceive by them the passions which are in his mind.

XI. Now from Sect. II., it is plain that distance is in its own nature imperceivable, and yet it is perceived by sight. It remains, therefore, that it be brought into view by means of some other *idea* that is itself immediately perceived in the act of *vision*.

XII. But those *lines* and *angles*, by means whereof *mathematicians* pretend to explain the perception of distance, are themselves not at all perceived, nor are they, in truth, ever thought of by those unskilful in optics. I appeal to any one's experience, whether, upon sight of an *object*, he compute its distance by the bigness of the *angle* made by the meeting of the two *optic axes?* Or whether he ever think of the greater or lesser divergency of the rays, which arrive from any point to his *pupil?* Nay, whether it be not perfectly impossible for him to perceive by sense the various angles wherewith the rays, according to their greater or lesser divergence, do fall on his eye. Every one is himself the best judge of what he perceives, and what not. In vain shall all the *mathematicians* in the world tell me, that I perceive certain *lines* and *angles* which introduce into my mind the various *ideas* of *distance;* so long as I myself am conscious of no such thing.

XIII. Since, therefore, those *angles* and *lines* are not themselves perceived by sight, it follows from Sect. x., that the mind does not by them judge of the distance of *objects.*

XIV. Secondly, the truth of this assertion will be yet further evident to any one that considers those *lines* and *angles* have no real existence in nature, being only an *hypothesis* framed by *mathematicians*, and by them introduced into *optics*, that they might treat of that science in a *geometrical* way.

XV. The third and last reason I shall give for my rejecting that doctrine is, that though we should grant the real existence of those *optic angles*, &c., and that it was possible for the mind to perceive them; yet these principles would not be found sufficient to explain the phenomena of *distance.* As shall be shown hereafter.

XVI. Now, it being already shown that distance is suggested to the mind by the mediation of some other *idea* which is itself perceived in the act of seeing. It remains that we inquire what *ideas* or *sensations* there be that attend *vision*, unto which we may suppose the *ideas* of distance are connected, and by which they are introduced into the mind. And first, it is certain by experience, that when we look at a near *object* with both eyes, according as it approaches or recedes from us, we alter the disposition of our eyes, by lessening or widening the interval between the *pupils.* This disposition or turn of the eyes is attended with a sensation, which seems to me, to be that which in this case brings the *idea* of greater or lesser distance into the mind.

XVII. Not that there is any natural or necessary connexion between the sensation we perceive by the turn of the eyes, and greater or lesser distance. But because the mind has by constant *experience* found the different sensations corresponding to the different dispositions of the eyes, to be attended each with a different

degree of distance in the *object:* there has grown an habitual or customary connexion, between those two sorts of *ideas.* So that the mind no sooner perceives the sensation arising from the different turn it gives the eyes, in order to bring the *pupils* nearer or further asunder, but it withal perceives the different *idea* of distance which was wont to be connected with that sensation. Just as upon hearing a certain sound, the *idea* is immediately suggested to the understanding, which custom had united with it.

XVIII. Nor do I see, how I can easily be mistaken in this matter. I know evidently that distance is not perceived of itself. That by consequence, it must be perceived by means of some other *idea* which is immediately perceived, and varies with the different degrees of distance. I know also that the sensation arising from the turn of the eyes is of itself immediately perceived, and various degrees thereof are connected with different distances: which never fail to accompany them into my mind, when I view an *object* distinctly with both eyes, whose distance is so small, that in respect of it the interval between the eyes has any considerable magnitude.

XIX. I know it is a received opinion, that by altering the disposition of the eyes, the mind perceives whether the angle of the *optic axes* is made greater or lesser. And that accordingly by a kind of *natural geometry,* it judges the point of their intersection to be nearer, or further off. But that this is not true, I am convinced by my own experience. Since I am not conscious that I make any such use of the perception I have by the turn of my eyes. And for me to make those judgments, and draw those conclusions from it, without knowing that I do so, seems altogether incomprehensible.

XX. From all which it plainly follows, that the judgment we make of the distance of an *object,* viewed with both eyes, is entirely the *result of experience.* If we had not constantly found certain sensations arising from the various disposition of the eyes, attended with certain degrees of distance, we should never make those sudden judgments from them, concerning the distance of *objects*; no more than we would pretend to judge of a man's thoughts, by his pronouncing words we had never heard before.

XXI. Secondly, an *object* placed at a certain distance from the eye, to which the breadth of the *pupil* bears a considerable proportion, being made to approach, is seen more confusedly. And the nearer it is brought, the more confused appearance it makes. And this being found constantly to be so, there arises in the mind an *habitual* connexion between the several degrees of confusion and distance. The greater confusion still implying the lesser distance, and the lesser confusion, the greater distance of the *object.*

XXII. This confused appearance of the *object,* doth therefore

seem to me to be the *medium*, whereby the mind judges of distance in those cases, wherein the most approved writers of optics will have it judge, by the different divergency with which the rays flowing from the radiating point fall on the *pupil*. No man, I believe, will pretend to see or feel those imaginary angles, that the rays are supposed to form according to their various inclinations on his eye. But he cannot choose seeing whether the *object* appear more or less confused. It is therefore a manifest consequence from what has been demonstrated, that instead of the greater or less divergency of the rays, the mind makes use of the greater or lesser confusedness of the appearance, thereby to determine the apparent place of an *object*.

XXIII. Nor doth it avail to say, there is not any necessary connexion between confused *vision*, and distance, great or small. For I ask any man, what necessary connexion he sees between the redness of a blush and shame? and yet no sooner shall he behold that colour to arise in the face of another, but it brings into his mind the *idea* of that passion which has been observed to accompany it.

XXIV. What seems to have misled the writers of optics in this matter is, that they imagine men judge of distance, as they do of a conclusion in mathematics: betwixt which and the premises, it is indeed absolutely requisite there be an apparent, necessary connexion. But it is far otherwise, in the sudden judgments men make of distance. We are not to think that brutes and children, or even grown reasonable men, whenever they perceive an *object* to approach, or depart from them, do it by virtue of *geometry* and *demonstration*.

XXV. That one *idea* may suggest another to the mind, it will suffice that they have been observed to go together: without any demonstration of the necessity of their coexistence, or without so much as knowing what it is that makes them so to coexist. Of this there are innumerable instances, of which no one can be ignorant.

XXVI. Thus greater confusion having been constantly attended with nearer distance, no sooner is the former *idea* perceived, but it suggests the latter to our thoughts. And if it had been the ordinary course of nature, that the further off an *object* were placed, the more confused it should appear; it is certain, the very same perception that now makes us think an *object* approaches, would then have made us to imagine it went further off. That perception, abstracting from *custom* and *experience*, being equally fitted to produce the *idea* of great distance, or small distance, or no distance at all.

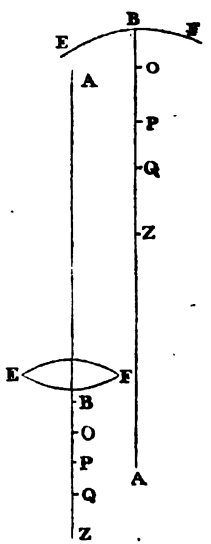
XXVII. Thirdly, an *object* being placed at the distance above specified, and brought nearer to the eye, we may nevertheless prevent, at least for some time, the appearance's growing more

confused, by straining the eye. In which case, that sensation supplies the place of confused *vision*, in aiding the mind to judge of the distance of the *object*. It being esteemed so much the nearer, by how much the effort, or straining of the eye in order to distinct *vision*, is greater.

XXVIII. I have here set down those sensations or *ideas* that seem to me to be the constant and general occasions of introducing into the mind the different *ideas* of near distance. It is true in most cases, that divers other circumstances contribute to frame our *idea* of distance, viz., the particular number, size, kind, &c., of the things seen. Concerning which, as well as all other the forementioned occasions which suggest distance, I shall only observe, they have none of them, in their own nature, any relation or connexion with it: nor is it possible they should ever signify the various degrees thereof, otherwise than as by *experience* they have been found to be connected with them.

XXIX. I shall proceed upon these principles to account for a phenomenon, which has hitherto strangely puzzled the writers of optics, and is so far from being accounted for by any of their *theories of vision*, that it is, by their own confession, plainly repugnant to them; and of consequence, if nothing else could be objected, were alone sufficient to bring their credit in question. The whole difficulty I shall lay before you in the words of the learned Doctor Barrow, with which he concludes his optic lectures.

"Hæc sunt, quæ circa partem opticæ præcipuè mathematicam dicenda mihi suggessit meditatio. Circa reliquas (quæ φυσικώτεραι sunt, adeoque sæpiusculè pro certis principiis plausibiles conjecturas venditare necessum habent), nihil ferè quicquam admodum verisimile succurrit, à pervulgatis (ab iis, inquam, quæ Keplerus, Scheinerus, Cartesius, et post illos alii tradiderunt) alienum aut diversum. Atqui tacere malo, quàm toties oblatam cramben reponere. Proinde receptui cano; nec ita tamen ut prorsus discedam, anteaquàm improbam quandam difficultatem (pro sinceritate quam et vobis et veritati debeo minimè dissimulandam) in medium protulero, quæ doctrinæ nostræ, hactenus inculcatæ, se objicit adversam, ab eâ saltem nullam admittit solutionem. Illa, breviter, talis est: Lenti vel speculo cavo E B F exponatur punctum visibile A, ita distans, ut radii ex A manantes ex inflectione versus axem A B cogantur. Sitque radiationis limes (seu puncti A imago, qualem supra

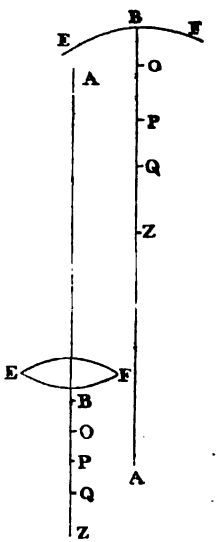


passim statuimus) punctum Z. Inter hoc autem et inflectentis verticem B uspiam positus concipiatur oculus. Quæri jam potest, ubi loci debeat punctum A apparere? Retrorsùm ad punctum Z videri non fert natura (cùm omnis impressio sensum afficiens proveniat a partibus A) ac experientia reclamat. Nostris autem è placitis consequi videtur, ipsum ad partes anticas apparens, ab intervallo longissimè dissito, (quod et maximum sensibile quodvis intervallum quodammodo exsuperet) apparere. Cùm enim quò radiis minùs divergentibus attingitur objectum, eò (seclusis utique prænotionibus et præjudiciis) longiùs abesse sentiatur; et quod parallelos ad oculum radios projicit, remotissimè positum æstimetur: exigere ratio videtur, ut quod convergentibus radiis apprehenditur, adhuc magis, si fieri posset, quoad apparentiam elongetur. Quin et circa casum hunc generatim inquiri possit, quidnam omnino sit, quod apparentem puncti A locum determinet, faciatque quòd constanti ratione nunc propius, nunc remotius appareat? Cui itidem dubio nihil quicquam ex hactenus dictorum *analogiâ* responderi posse videtur, nisi debere punctum A perpetuò longissimè semotum videri. Verùm experientia secùs attestatur, illud pro diversâ oculi inter puncta B, Z, positione variè distans, nunquam ferè (si unquam) longinquius ipso A liberè spectato, subindè verò multò propinquius apparere; quinimo, quò oculum appellentes radii magis convergunt, eò speciem objecti propiùs accedere. Nempe, si puncto B admoveatur oculus, suo (ad lentem) ferè nativo in loco conspicitur punctum A (vel æquè distans, ad speculum); ad O reductus oculus ejusce speciem appropinquantem cernit; ad P adhuc vicinius ipsum existimat; ac ità sensim, donec alicubi tandem, velut ad Q, constituto oculo objectum summè propinquum apparens, in meram confusionem incipiat evanescere. Quæ sanè cuncta rationibus atque decretis nostris repugnare videntur, aut cum iis saltem parum amicè conspirant. Neque nostram tantùm sententiam pulsat hoc experimentum, at ex æquo cæteras quas nôrim omnes: veterem imprimis ac vulgatam, nostræ præ reliquis affinem, ità convellere videtur, ut ejus vi coactus doctissimus A. Tacquetus isti principio (cui penè soli totam inædificaverat Captoptricam suam) ceu infido ac inconstanti renunciârit, adeoque suam ipse doctrinam labefactârit; id tamen, opinor, minimè facturus, si rem totam inspexisset penitiùs, atque difficultatis fundum attigisset. Apud me verò non ita pollet hæc, nec eousque præpollebit ulla difficultas, ut ab iis quæ manifestè rationi consentanea video, discedam; præsertim quum, ut hîc accidit, ejusmodi difficultas in singularis cujuspiam casûs disparitate fundetur. Nimirum in præsente casu peculiare quiddam, naturæ subtilitati involutum, delitescit, ægrè fortassis, nisi perfectiùs explorato videndi modo, detegendum. Circa quod nil, fateor, hactenus excogitare potui quod adblandiretur animo meo, nedum plane satisfaceret. Vobis

itaque nodum hunc, utinam feliciore conatu, resolvendum committo."

IN ENGLISH AS FOLLOWS:

"I have here delivered what my thoughts have suggested to me, concerning that part of optics which is more properly mathematical. As for the other parts of that science (which being rather physical, do consequently abound with plausible conjectures, instead of certain principles) there has in them scarce any thing occurred to my observation, different from what has been already said by Kepler, Scheinerus, Descartes, &c. And, methinks, I had better say nothing at all, than repeat that which has been so often said by others; I think it therefore high time to take my leave of this subject. But before I quit it for good and all, the fair and ingenuous dealing that I owe both to you and to truth, obliges me to acquaint you with a certain untoward difficulty, which seems directly opposite to the doctrine I have been hitherto inculcating, at least, admits of no solution from it. In short it is this. Before the double convex glass or concave speculum E B F, let the point A be placed, at such a distance that the rays proceeding from A, after refraction or reflection, be brought to unite somewhere in the ax A B. And suppose the point of union (i. e. the image of the point A, as hath been already set forth) to be Z; between which and B, the vertex of the glass or speculum, conceive the eye to be any where placed. The question now is, where the point A ought to appear. Experience shows, that it doth not appear behind at the point Z, and it were contrary to nature that it should; since all the impression which affects the sense comes from towards A. But from our tenets it should seem to follow, that it would appear before the eye at a vast distance off, so great as should in some sort surpass all sensible distance. For since, if we exclude all anticipations and prejudices, every *object* appears by so much the further off, by how much the rays it sends to the eye are less diverging; and that *object* is thought to be most remote, from which parallel rays proceed unto the eye; reason would make one think, that *object* should appear at yet a greater distance, which is seen by converging rays. Moreover it may in general be asked concerning this case, what it is that determines the apparent place of the point A, and maketh it to appear after a constant manner, sometimes nearer, at other times further off? To which doubt I see



nothing that can be answered agreeable to the principles we have laid down, except only that the point A ought always to appear extremely remote. But on the contrary, we are assured by experience, that the point A appears variously distant, according to the different situations of the eye between the points B and Z. And that it doth almost never (if at all) seem further off, than it would if it were beheld by the naked eye; but on the contrary, it doth sometimes appear much nearer. Nay, it is even certain, that by how much the rays falling on the eye do more converge, by so much the nearer does the *object* seem to approach. For the eye being placed close to the point B, the *object* A appears nearly in its own natural place, if the point B is taken in the glass, or at the same distance, if in the speculum. The eye being brought back to O, the *object* seems to draw near; and being come to P, it beholds it still nearer: and so on by little and little, till at length the eye being placed somewhere, suppose at Q, the *object* appearing extremely near, begins to vanish into mere confusion. All which doth seem repugnant to our principles; at least, not rightly to agree with them. Nor is our tenet alone struck at by this experiment, but likewise all others that ever came to my knowledge are every whit as much endangered by it. The ancient one especially (which is most commonly received, and comes nearest to mine) seems to be so effectually overthrown thereby, that the most learned Tacquet has been forced to reject that principle, as false and uncertain, on which alone he had built almost his whole Catoptrics, and consequently by taking away the foundation, hath himself pulled down the superstructure he had raised on it. Which nevertheless I do not believe he would have done, had he but considered the whole matter more thoroughly, and examined the difficulty to the bottom. But as for me, neither this, nor any other difficulty shall have so great an influence on me, as to make me renounce that which I know to be manifestly agreeable to reason. Especially when, as it here falls out, the difficulty is founded in the peculiar nature of a certain odd and particular case. For in the present case something peculiar lies hid, which being involved in the subtilty of nature, will perhaps hardly be discovered till such time as the manner of vision is more perfectly made known. Concerning which, I must own, I have hitherto been able to find out nothing, that has the least show of *probability*, not to mention *certainty*. I shall therefore leave this knot to be untied by you, wishing you may have better success in it than I have had."

XXX. The ancient and received principle, which Dr. Barrow here mentions as the main foundation of Tacquet's Catoptrics, is, that 'every visible point seen by reflection from a speculum, shall appear placed at the intersection of the reflected ray and the perpendicular of incidence:' which intersection in the present case

happening to be behind the eye, it greatly shakes the authority of that principle, whereon the aforementioned author proceeds throughout his whole catoptrics, in determining the apparent place of *objects* seen by reflection from any kind of speculum.

XXXI. Let us now see how this phenomenon agrees with our tenets. The eye the nearer it is placed to the point B in the above figures, the more distinct is the appearance of the *object*: but as it recedes to O, the appearance grows more confused; and at P it sees the *object* yet more confused; and so on, till the eye being brought back to Z, sees the *object* in the greatest confusion of all. Wherefore by Sect. XXI. the *object* should seem to approach the eye gradually, as it recedes from the point B, viz. at O it should (in consequence of the principle I have laid down in the aforesaid section) seem nearer than it did at B, and at P nearer than O, and at Q nearer than at P; and so on, till it quite vanishes at Z. Which is the very matter of fact, as any one that pleases may easily satisfy himself by experiment.

XXXII. This case is much the same, as if we should suppose an Englishman to meet a foreigner, who used the same words with the English, but in a direct contrary signification. The Englishman would not fail to make a wrong judgment of the *ideas* annexed to those sounds, in the mind of him that used them. Just so in the present case, the *object* speaks (if I may so say) with words that the eye is well acquainted with, viz. confusions of appearance; but whereas heretofore the greatest confusions were always wont to signify nearer distances, they have in this case a direct contrary signification, being connected with the greater distances. Whence it follows, that the eye must unavoidably be mistaken, since it will take the confusions in the sense it has been used to, which is directly opposed to the true.

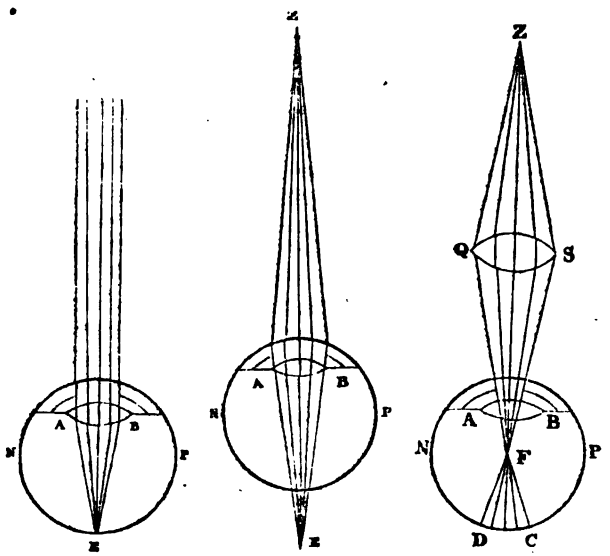
XXXIII. This phenomenon, as it entirely subverts the opinion of those who will have us judge of distance by lines and angles, on which supposition it is altogether inexplicable, so it seems to me no small confirmation of the truth of that principle whereby it is explained. But in order to a more full explication of this point, and to show how far the hypothesis of the mind's judging by the various divergency of rays may be of use in determining the apparent place of an *object*, it will be necessary to premise some few things, which are already well known to those who have any skill in dioptrics.

XXXIV. First, any radiating point is then distinctly seen, when the rays proceeding from it are, by the refractive power of the crystalline, accurately reunited in the retina, or fund of the eye. But if they are reunited, either before they are at retina, or after they have past it, then there is confused vision.

XXXV. Secondly, suppose in the adjacent figures N P represent an eye duly framed, and retaining its natural figure. In

fig. 1, the rays falling nearly parallel on the eye, are by the crystalline A B refracted, so as their focus, or point of union F, falls exactly on the retina. But if the rays fall sensibly diverging on the eye, as in fig. 2, then their focus falls beyond the retina: or if the rays are made to converge by the lens Q S, before they come at the eye, as in fig. 3, their focus F will fall

Fig. 1. Fig. 2. Fig. 3.



before the retina. In which two last cases, it is evident from the foregoing section, that the appearance of the point Z is confused. And by how much the greater is the convergency or divergency of the rays falling on the pupil, by so much the further will the point of their reunion be from the retina, either before or behind it, and consequently the point Z will appear by so much the more confused. And this, by the bye, may show us the difference between confused and faint vision. Confused vision is, when the rays proceeding from each distinct point of the *object*, are not accurately re-collected in one corresponding point of the retina, but take up some space thereon. So that rays from different points become mixed and confused together. This is opposed to distinct vision, and attends near objects. Faint vision is, when by reason of the distance of the object, or grossness of the interjacent medium, few rays arrive from the object to the eye. This is opposed to vigorous, or clear vision, and attends remote objects. But to return.

XXXVI. The eye, or (to speak truly) the mind perceiving only the confusion itself, without ever considering the cause from

which it proceeds, doth constantly annex the same degree of distance to the same degree of confusion. Whether that confusion be occasioned by converging or by diverging rays, it matters not. Whence it follows, that the eye viewing the object Z through the glass Q S (which by refraction causeth the rays Z Q, Z S, &c., to converge), should judge it to be at such a nearness, at which if it were placed, it would radiate on the eye with rays diverging to that degree, as would produce the same confusion which is now produced by converging rays, i. e. would cover a portion of the retina equal to D C: vide fig. 3, supra. But then this must be understood (to use Dr. Barrow's phrase) *seclusis prænotionibus et præjudiciis*, in case we abstract from all other circumstances of vision, such as the figure, size, faintness, &c., of the visible objects; all which do ordinarily concur to form our idea of distance, the mind having by frequent experience observed their several sorts or degrees to be connected with various distances.

XXXVII. It plainly follows from what hath been said, that a person perfectly purblind (i. e. that could not see an object distinctly, but when placed close to his eye) would not make the same wrong judgment that others do, in the forementioned case. For, to him, greater confusions constantly suggesting greater distances, he must, as he recedes from the glass, and the object grows more confused, judge it to be at a further distance; contrary to what they do, who have had the perception of the objects growing more confused, connected with the idea of approach.

XXXVIII. Hence also it doth appear, there may be good use of computation by lines and angles in optics; not that the mind judgeth of distance immediately by them, but because it judgeth by somewhat which is connected with them, and to the determination whereof they may be subservient. Thus the mind judging of the distance of an object by the confusedness of its appearance, and this confusedness being greater or lesser to the naked eye, according as the object is seen by rays more or less diverging, it follows that a man may make use of the divergency of the rays in computing the apparent distance, though not for its own sake, yet on account of the confusion with which it is connected. But, so it is, the confusion itself is entirely neglected by mathematicians, as having no necessary relation with distance, such as the greater or lesser angles of divergency are conceived to have. And these (especially for that they fall under mathematical computation) are alone regarded, in determining the apparent places of objects, as though they were the sole and immediate cause of the judgments the mind makes of distance. Whereas, in truth, they should not at all be regarded in themselves, or any otherwise, than as they are supposed to be the cause of confused vision.

XXXIX. The not considering of this has been a fundamental and perplexing oversight. For proof whereof, we need go no further than the case before us. It having been observed, that the most diverging rays brought into the mind the idea of nearest distance, and that still, as the divergency decreased, the distance increased; and it being thought, the connexion between the various degrees of divergency and distance was immediate, this naturally leads one to conclude, from an ill grounded analogy, that converging rays shall make an object appear at an immense distance: and that, as the convergency increases, the distance (if it were possible) should do so likewise. That this was the cause of Dr. Barrow's mistake, is evident from his own words which we have quoted. Whereas had the learned Doctor observed, that diverging and converging rays, how opposite soever they may seem, do nevertheless agree in producing the same effect, to wit, confusedness of vision, greater degrees whereof are produced indifferently, either as the divergency or convergency of the rays increaseth; and that it is by this effect, which is the same in both, that either the divergency or convergency is perceived by the eye;—I say had he but considered this, it is certain he would have made a quite contrary judgment, and rightly concluded, that those rays which fall on the eye with greater degrees of convergency should make the object from whence they proceed, appear by so much the nearer. But it is plain, it was impossible for any man to attain to a right notion of this matter, so long as he had regard only to lines and angles, and did not apprehend the true nature of vision, and how far it was of mathematical consideration.

XL. Before we dismiss this subject, it is fit we take notice of a query relating thereto, proposed by the ingenious Mr. Molyneux, in his treatise of Dioptrics,* where, speaking of this difficulty, he has these words: "And so he (i. e. Dr. Barrow) leaves this difficulty to the solution of others, which I (after so great an example) shall do likewise; but with the resolution of the same admirable author of not quitting the evident doctrine which we have before laid down, for determining the *locus objecti*, on account of being pressed by one difficulty, which seems inexplicable till a more intimate knowledge of the visive faculty be obtained by mortals. In the mean time, I propose it to the consideration of the ingenious, whether the *locus apparens* of an object placed as in this 9th Section, be not as much before the eye, as the distinct base is behind the eye." To which query we may venture to answer in the negative. For in the present case, the rule for determining the distance of the distinct base or respective focus from the glass is this: As the difference between the distance of the object and focus is to the focus or focal length,

* Par. I. Prop. xxxi. Sect. 9.

so the distance of the object from the glass is to the distance of the respective focus or distinct base from the glass.* Let us now suppose the object to be placed at the distance of the focal length, and one half of the focal length from the glass, and the eye close to the glass, hence it will follow by the rule, that the distance of the distinct base behind the eye is double the true distance of the object before the eye. If therefore Mr. Molyneux's conjecture held good, it would follow that the eye should see the object twice as far off as it really is; and in other cases at three or four times its due distance, or more. But this manifestly contradicts experience, the object never appearing, at furthest, beyond its due distance. Whatever therefore is built on this supposition (vid. Corol. 1. Prop. lvii. ibid.) comes to the ground along with it.

XLI. From what hath been premised, it is a manifest consequence, that a man born blind, being made to see, would, at first, have no idea of distance by sight; the sun and stars, the remotest objects as well as the nearer, would all seem to be in his eye, or rather in his mind. The objects intromitted by sight, would seem to him (as in truth they are) no other than a new set of thoughts or sensations, each whereof is as near to him, as the perceptions of pain or pleasure, or the most inward passions of his soul. For our judging objects perceived by sight to be at any distance, or without the mind, is (vide Sect. XXVIII.) entirely the effect of experience, which one in those circumstances could not yet have attained to.

XLII. It is indeed otherwise upon the common supposition, that men judge of distance by the angle of the optic axes, just as one in the dark, or a blind man by the angle comprehended by two sticks, one whereof he held in each hand. For if this were true, it would follow that one blind from his birth being made to see, should stand in need of no new experience, in order to perceive distance by sight. But that this is false, has, I think, been sufficiently demonstrated.

XLIII. And perhaps upon a strict inquiry, we shall not find that even those, who from their birth have grown up in a continued habit of seeing, are irrecoverably prejudiced on the other side, to wit, in thinking what they see to be at a distance from them. For at this time it seems agreed on all hands, by those who have had any thoughts of that matter, that colours, which are the proper and immediate object of sight, are not without the mind. But then it will be said, by sight we have also the ideas of extension, and figure, and motion; all which may well be thought without, and at some distance from the mind, though colour should not. In answer to this, I appeal to any man's experience, whether the visible extension of any object doth not

* Molyneux Diopt. Par. I. Prop. v.

appear as near to him, as the colour of that object; nay, whether they do not both seem to be in the very same place. Is not the extension we see coloured, and is it possible for us, so much as in thought, to separate and abstract colour from extension? Now, where the extension is, there surely is the figure, and there the motion too. I speak of those which are perceived by sight.

XLIV. But for a fuller explication of this point, and to show that the immediate objects of sight are not so much as the ideas or resemblances of things placed at a distance, it is requisite that we look nearer into the matter, and carefully observe what is meant in common discourse, when one says, that which he sees is at a distance from him. Suppose, for example, that looking at the moon I should say it were fifty or sixty semidiameters of the earth distant from me. Let us see what moon this is spoken of: it is plain it cannot be the visible moon, or any thing like the visible moon, or that which I see, which is only a round, luminous plain, of about thirty visible points in diameter. For in case I am carried from the place where I stand directly towards the moon, it is manifest the object varies, still as I go on; and by the time that I am advanced fifty or sixty semidiameters of the earth, I shall be so far from being near a small, round, luminous flat, that I shall perceive nothing like it; this object having long since disappeared, and if I would recover it, it must be by going back to the earth from whence I set out. Again, suppose I perceive by sight the faint and obscure idea of something, which I doubt whether it be a man, or a tree, or a tower, but judge it to be at the distance of about a mile. It is plain I cannot mean, that what I see is a mile off, or that it is the image or likeness of any thing which is a mile off, since that every step I take towards it, the appearance alters, and from being obscure, small, and faint, grows clear, large, and vigorous. And when I come to the mile's end, that which I saw first is quite lost, neither do I find any thing in the likeness of it.

XLV. In these and the like instances, the truth of the matter stands thus: having of a long time experienced certain ideas, perceivable by touch, as distance, tangible figure, and solidity, to have been connected with certain ideas of sight, I do, upon perceiving these ideas of sight, forthwith conclude what tangible ideas are, by the wonted ordinary course of nature, like to follow. Looking at an object, I perceive a certain visible figure and colour, with some degree of faintness and other circumstances, which from what I have formerly observed, determine me to think, that if I advance forward so many paces or miles, I shall be affected with such and such ideas of touch: so that in truth and strictness of speech, I neither see distance itself, nor any thing that I take to be at a distance. I say, neither distance, nor things placed at a distance are themselves, or their ideas, truly perceived

by sight. This I am persuaded of, as to what concerns myself; and I believe whoever will look narrowly into his own thoughts, and examine what he means by saying, he sees this or that thing at a distance, will agree with me, that what he sees only suggests to his understanding, that after having passed a certain distance, to be measured by the motion of his body, which is perceivable by touch, he shall come to perceive such and such tangible ideas which have been usually connected with such and such visible ideas. But that one might be deceived by these suggestions of sense, and that there is no necessary connexion between visible and tangible ideas suggested by them, we need go no further than the next looking-glass or picture to be convinced. Note, that when I speak of tangible ideas, I take the word idea for any the immediate object of sense, or understanding, in which large signification it is commonly used by the moderns.

XLVI. From what we have shown it is a manifest consequence, that the ideas of space, outness, and things placed at a distance, are not, strictly speaking, the object of sight; they are not otherwise perceived by the eye than by the ear. Sitting in my study I hear a coach drive along the street; I look through the casement and see it; I walk out and enter into it; thus, common speech would incline one to think, I heard, saw, and touched the same thing, to wit, the coach. It is nevertheless certain, the ideas intromitted by each sense are widely different, and distinct from each other; but having been observed constantly to go together, they are spoken of as one and the same thing. By the variation of the noise I perceive the different distances of the coach, and know that it approaches before I look out. Thus by the ear I perceive distance, just after the same manner as I do by the eye.

XLVII. I do not nevertheless say, I hear distance in like manner as I say that I see it, the ideas perceived by hearing not being so apt to be confounded with the ideas of touch, as those of sight are; so likewise a man is easily convinced that bodies and external things are not properly the object of hearing, but only sounds, by the mediation whereof the idea of this or that body or distance is suggested to his thoughts. But then one is with more difficulty brought to discern the difference there is betwixt the ideas of sight and touch: though it be certain, a man no more sees or feels the same thing, than he hears and feels the same thing.

XLVIII. One reason of which seems to be this: It is thought a great absurdity to imagine, that one and the same thing should have any more than one extension, and one figure. But the extension and figure of a body, being let into the mind two ways, and that indifferently, either by sight or touch, it seems to follow that we see the same extension, and the same figure which we feel.

XLIX. But if we take a close and accurate view of things, it must be acknowledged that we never see and feel one and the same object. That which is seen is one thing, and that which is felt is another; if the visible figure and extension be not the same with the tangible figure and extension, we are not to infer that one and the same thing has divers extensions. The true consequence is, that the objects of sight and touch are two distinct things. It may perhaps require some thought rightly to conceive this distinction. And the difficulty seems not a little increased, because the combination of visible ideas hath constantly the same name as the combination of tangible ideas wherewith it is connected: which doth of necessity arise from the use and end of language.

L. In order therefore to treat accurately and unconfusedly of vision, we must bear in mind that there are two sorts of objects apprehended by the eye, the one primarily and immediately, the other secondarily and by intervention of the former. Those of the first sort neither are, nor appear to be, without the mind, or at any distance off; they may indeed grow greater or smaller, more confused, or more clear, or more faint, but they do not, cannot approach or recede from us. Whenever we say an object is at a distance, whenever we say it draws near, or goes further off, we must always mean it of the latter sort, which properly belong to the touch, and are not so truly perceived, as suggested by the eye in like manner as thoughts by the ear.

LI. No sooner do we hear the words of a familiar language pronounced in our ears, but the ideas corresponding thereto present themselves to our minds; in the very same instant the sound and the meaning enter the understanding: so closely are they united, that it is not in our power to keep out the one, except we exclude the other also. We even act in all respects as if we heard the very thoughts themselves. So likewise the secondary objects, or those which are only suggested by sight, do often more strongly affect us, and are more regarded than the proper objects of that sense, along with which they enter into the mind, and with which they have a far more strict connexion, than ideas have with words. Hence it is, we find it so difficult to discriminate between the immediate and mediate objects of sight, and are so prone to attribute to the former, what belongs only to the latter. They are, as it were, most closely twisted, blended, and incorporated together. And the prejudice is confirmed and riveted in our thoughts by a long tract of time, by the use of language and want of reflection. However, I believe any one that shall attentively consider what we have already said, and shall say upon this subject before we have done, (especially if he pursue it in his own thoughts) may be able to deliver himself from that prejudice. Sure I am, it is worth some

attention to whoever would understand the true nature of vision.

LII. I have now done with distance, and proceed to show how it is, that we perceive by sight the magnitude of objects. It is the opinion of some that we do it by angles, or by angles in conjunction with distance. But neither angles nor distance being perceivable by sight, and the things we see being in truth at no distance from us, it follows, that as we have shown lines and angles not to be the medium the mind makes use of in apprehending the apparent place, so neither are they the medium whereby it apprehends the apparent magnitude of objects.

LIII. It is well known, that the same extension at a near distance shall subtend a greater angle, and at a further distance a lesser angle. And by this principle, we are told, the mind estimates the magnitude of an object, comparing the angle under which it is seen with its distance, and thence inferring the magnitude thereof. What inclines men to this mistake (beside the humour of making one see by geometry) is, that the same perceptions or ideas which suggest distance, do also suggest magnitude. But if we examine it, we shall find they suggest the latter, as immediately as the former. I say they do not first suggest distance, and then leave it to the judgment to use that as a medium, whereby to collect the magnitude; but they have as close and immediate a connexion with the magnitude, as with the distance; and suggest magnitude as independently of distance, as they do distance independently of magnitude. All which will be evident to whoever considers what hath been already said, and what follows.

LIV. It hath been shown, there are two sorts of objects apprehended by sight; each whereof hath its distinct magnitude, or extension. The one properly tangible, i. e. to be perceived and measured by touch, and not immediately falling under the sense of seeing: the other, properly and immediately visible, by mediation of which the former is brought in view. Each of these magnitudes are greater or lesser, according as they contain in them more or fewer points; they being made up of points or minimums. For, whatever may be said of extension in abstract, it is certain, sensible extension is not infinitely divisible. There is a *minimum tangibile*, and a *minimum visibile*, beyond which sense cannot perceive. This every one's experience will inform him.

LV. The magnitude of the object which exists without the mind, and is at a distance, continues always invariably the same: but the visible object still changing as you approach to, or recede from the tangible object, it hath no fixed and determinate greatness. Whenever therefore we speak of the magnitude of any thing, for instance a tree or a house, we must mean the tangible magnitude; otherwise there can be nothing steady and free from ambiguity spoken of it. But though the tangible and visible

magnitude in truth belong to two distinct objects, I shall nevertheless (especially since those objects are called by the same name and are observed to coexist) to avoid tediousness and singularity of speech, sometimes speak of them as belonging to one and the same thing.

LVI. Now in order to discover by what means the magnitude of tangible objects is perceived by sight, I need only reflect on what passes in my own mind, and observe what those things be which introduce the ideas of greater or lesser into my thoughts, when I look on any object. And these I find to be, first, the magnitude or extension of the visible object, which being immediately perceived by sight, is connected with that other which is tangible, and placed at a distance; secondly, the confusion or distinctness: and thirdly, the vigorousness or faintness of the aforesaid visible appearance. *Cæteris paribus*, by how much the greater or lesser the visible object is, by so much the greater or lesser do I conclude the tangible object to be. But be the idea immediately perceived by sight never so large, yet if it be withal confused, I judge the magnitude of the thing to be but small: if it be distinct and clear, I judge it greater: and if it be faint, I apprehend it to be yet greater. What is here meant by confusion and faintness, hath been explained in Sect. XXXV.

LVII. Moreover the judgments we make of greatness do, in like manner, as those of distance, depend on the disposition of the eye; also on the figure, number, and situation of objects, and other circumstances that have been observed to attend great or small tangible magnitudes. Thus, for instance, the very same quantity of visible extension, which in the figure of a tower doth suggest the idea of great magnitude, shall in the figure of a man suggest the idea of much smaller magnitude. That this is owing to the experience we have had of the usual bigness of a tower and a man, no one, I suppose, need be told.

LVIII. It is also evident, that confusion or faintness have no more a necessary connexion with little or great magnitude, than they have with little or great distance. As they suggest the latter, so they suggest the former to our mind. And by consequence, if it were not for experience, we should no more judge a faint or confused appearance to be connected with great or little magnitude, than we should that it was connected with great or little distance.

LIX. Nor will it be found, that great or small visible magnitude hath any necessary relation to great or small tangible magnitude; so that the one may certainly be inferred from the other. But, before we come to the proof of this, it is fit we consider the difference there is betwixt the extension and figure which is the proper object of touch, and that other which is termed visible; and how the former is principally, though not immediately, taken

notice of, when we look at any object. This has been before mentioned, but we shall here inquire into the cause thereof. We regard the objects that environ us, in proportion as they are adapted to benefit or injure our own bodies, and thereby produce in our minds the sensations of pleasure or pain. Now bodies operating on our organs by an immediate application, and the hurt or advantage arising therefrom depending altogether on the tangible, and not at all on the visible, qualities of any object; this is a plain reason why those should be regarded by us much more than these: and for this end the visive sense seems to have been bestowed on animals, to wit, that by the perception of visible ideas (which in themselves are not capable of affecting, or any wise altering the frame of their bodies) they may be able to foresee (from the experience they have had, what tangible ideas are connected with such and such visible ideas) the damage or benefit which is like to ensue, upon the application of their own bodies to this or that body which is at a distance: which foresight how necessary it is to the preservation of an animal, every one's experience can inform him. Hence it is, that when we look at an object, the tangible figure and extension thereof are principally attended to; whilst there is small heed taken of the visible figure and magnitude, which, though more immediately perceived, do less concern us, and are not fitted to produce any alteration in our bodies.

LX. That the matter of fact is true, will be evident to any one, who considers that a man placed at ten foot distance, is thought as great, as if he were placed at the distance of only five foot: which is true, not with relation to the visible, but tangible greatness of the object. The visible magnitude being far greater at one station than it is at the other.

LXI. Inches, feet, &c., are settled, stated lengths, whereby we measure objects, and estimate their magnitude. We say, for example, an object appears to be six inches or six foot long. Now, that this cannot be meant of visible inches, &c., is evident, because a visible inch is itself no constant, determinate magnitude, and cannot therefore serve to mark out and determine the magnitude of any other thing. Take an inch marked upon a ruler; view it successively, at the distance of half a foot, a foot, a foot and a half, &c., from the eye: at each of which, and at all the intermediate distances, the inch shall have a different visible extension, i. e. there shall be more or fewer points discerned in it. Now I ask, which of all these various extensions is that stated, determinate one, that is agreed on for a common measure of other magnitudes? No reason can be assigned, why we should pitch on one, more than another: and except there be some invariable, determinate extension fixed on to be marked by the word inch, it is plain, it can be used to little purpose; and to say, a thing con-

tains this or that number of inches, shall imply no more than that it is extended, without bringing any particular idea of that extension into the mind. Further, an inch and a foot, from different distances, shall both exhibit the same visible magnitude, and yet at the same time you shall say, that one seems several times greater than the other. From all which it is manifest, that the judgments we make of the magnitude of objects by sight, are altogether in reference to their tangible extension. Whenever we say an object is great or small, of this or that determinate measure, I say, it must be meant of the tangible, and not the visible extension, which, though immediately perceived, is nevertheless little taken notice of.

LXII. Now, that there is no necessary connexion between these two distinct extensions, is evident from hence; because our eyes might have been framed in such a manner, as to be able to see nothing but what were less than the *minimum tangibile*. In which case, it is not impossible we might have perceived all the immediate objects of sight, the very same that we do now: but unto those visible appearances, there would not be connected those different tangible magnitudes, that are now. Which shows, the judgments we make of the magnitude of things placed at a distance, from the various greatness of the immediate objects of sight, do not arise from any essential or necessary, but only a customary tie, which has been observed between them.

LXIII. Moreover, it is not only certain, that any idea of sight might not have been connected with this or that idea of touch, which we now observe to accompany it; but also, that the greater visible magnitudes might have been connected with, and introduced into our minds lesser tangible magnitudes, and the lesser visible magnitudes greater tangible magnitudes. Nay, that it actually is so, we have daily experience; that object which makes a strong and large appearance, not seeming near so great as another, the visible magnitude whereof is much less, but more faint, and the appearance upper, or which is the same thing painted lower on the *retina*, which faintness and situation suggest both greater magnitude and greater distance.

LXIV. From which, and from Sect. LVII. LVIII., it is manifest, that as we do not perceive the magnitude of objects immediately by sight, so neither do we perceive them by the mediation of any thing which has a necessary connexion with them. Those ideas that now suggest unto us the various magnitudes of external objects, before we touch them, might possibly have suggested no such thing: or they might have signified them, in a direct contrary manner; so that the very same ideas, on the perception whereof we judge an object to be small, might as well have served to make us conclude it great. Those ideas being in their own nature equally fitted to bring into our minds

the idea of small, or great, or no size at all of outward objects; just as the words of any language are in their own nature indifferent to signify this or that thing, or nothing at all.

LXV. As we see distance, so we see magnitude. And we see both, in the same way that we see shame or anger in the looks of a man. Those passions are themselves invisible: they are nevertheless let in by the eye along with colours and alterations of countenance, which are the immediate object of vision, and which signify them for no other reason, than barely because they have been observed to accompany them: without which experience, we should no more have taken blushing for a sign of shame, than of gladness.

LXVI. We are nevertheless exceeding prone to imagine those things, which are perceived only by the mediation of others, to be themselves the immediate objects of sight; or, at least, to have in their own nature a fitness to be suggested by them, before ever they had been experienced to coexist with them. From which prejudice every one, perhaps, will not find it easy to emancipate himself, by any the clearest convictions of reason. And there are some grounds to think, that if there was one only invariable and universal language in the world, and that men were born with the faculty of speaking it, it would be the opinion of many, that the ideas in other men's minds were properly perceived by the ear, or had at least a necessary and inseparable tie with the sounds that were affixed to them. All which seems to arise from a want of due application of our discerning faculty, thereby to discriminate between the ideas that are in our understandings, and consider them apart from each other; which would preserve us from confounding those that are different, and make us see what ideas do, and what do not include or imply this or that other idea.

LXVII. There is a celebrated phenomenon, the solution whereof I shall attempt to give, by the principles that have been laid down, in reference to the manner wherein we apprehend by sight the magnitude of objects. The apparent magnitude of the moon, when placed in the horizon, is much greater than when it is in the meridian; though the angle under which the diameter of the moon is seen, be not observed greater in the former case, than in the latter: and the horizontal moon doth not constantly appear of the same bigness, but at some times seemeth far greater than at others.

LXVIII. Now in order to explain the reason of the moon's appearing greater than ordinary in the horizon, it must be observed, that the particles which compose our atmosphere intercept the rays of light proceeding from any object to the eye; and by how much the greater is the portion of atmosphere interjacent between the object and the eye, by so much the more

are the rays intercepted; and by consequence, the appearance of the object rendered more faint, every object appearing more vigorous or more faint, in proportion as it sendeth more or fewer rays into the eye. Now, between the eye and the moon, when situated in the horizon, there lies a far greater quantity of atmosphere, than there does when the moon is in the meridian. Whence it comes to pass, that the appearance of the horizontal moon is fainter, and therefore by Sect. LVI. it should be thought bigger in that situation, than in the meridian, or in any other elevation above the horizon.

LXIX. Further, the air being variously impregnated, sometimes more and sometimes less with vapours and exhalations fitted to retund and intercept the rays of light, it follows, that the appearance of the horizontal moon hath not always an equal faintness, and by consequence, that luminary, though in the very same situation, is at one time judged greater than at another.

LXX. That we have here given the true account of the phenomena of the horizontal moon, will, I suppose, be further evident to any one from the following considerations. First, it is plain, that which in this case suggests the idea of greater magnitude, must be something which is itself perceived; for, that which is unperceived cannot suggest to our perception any other thing. Secondly, it must be something that does not constantly remain the same, but is subject to some change or variation, since the appearance of the horizontal moon varies, being at one time greater than at another. And yet, thirdly, it cannot be the visible figure or magnitude, since that remains the same, or is rather lesser, by how much the moon is nearer to the horizon. It remains therefore, that the true cause is that affection or alteration of the visible appearance, which proceeds from the greater paucity of rays arriving at the eye, and which I term *faintness*, since this answers all the forementioned conditions, and I am not conscious of any other perception that doth.

LXXI. Add to this, that in misty weather it is a common observation, that the appearance of the horizontal moon is far larger than usual, which greatly conspires with, and strengthens our opinion. Neither would it prove, in the least, irreconcileable with what we have said, if the horizontal moon should chance sometimes to seem enlarged beyond its usual extent, even in more serene weather. For we must not only have regard to the mist which happens to be in the place where we stand; we ought also to take into our thoughts the whole sum of vapours and exhalations, which lie betwixt the eye and the moon: all which cooperating to render the appearance of the moon more faint, and thereby increase its magnitude, it may chance to appear greater than it usually does, even in the horizontal position, at a time when, though there be no extraordinary fog or haziness

just in the place where we stand; yet, the air between the eye and the moon, taken altogether, may be loaded with a greater quantity of interspersed vapours and exhalations, than at other times.

LXXII. It may be objected, that in consequence of our principles, the interposition of a body in some degree opaque, which may intercept a great part of the rays of light, should render the appearance of the moon in the meridian as large, as when it is viewed in the horizon. To which I answer, it is not faintness any how applied, that suggests greater magnitude, there being no necessary, but only an experimental connexion between those two things: it follows, that the faintness, which enlarges the appearance, must be applied in such sort, and with such circumstances, as have been observed to attend the vision of great magnitudes. When from a distance we behold great objects, the particles of the intermediate air and vapours, which are themselves unperceivable, do interrupt the rays of light, and thereby render the appearance less strong and vivid; now, faintness of appearance, caused in this sort, hath been experienced to coexist with great magnitude. But when it is caused by the interposition of an opaque sensible body, this circumstance alters the case, so that a faint appearance this way caused, doth not suggest greater magnitude, because it hath not been experienced to coexist with it.

LXXIII. Faintness, as well as all other ideas of perceptions, which suggest magnitude or distance, doth it in the same way that words suggest the notions to which they are annexed. Now it is known, a word pronounced with certain circumstances, or in a certain context with other words, hath not always the same import and signification that it hath when pronounced in some other circumstances, or different context of words. The very same visible appearance as to faintness and all other respects, if placed on high, shall not suggest the same magnitude that it would if it were seen at an equal distance, on a level with the eye. The reason whereof is, that we are rarely accustomed to view objects at a great height; our concerns lie among things situated rather before than above us; and accordingly our eyes are not placed on the top of our heads, but in such a position as is most convenient for us to see distant objects standing in our way, and this situation of them being a circumstance which usually attends the vision of distant objects, we may from hence account for (what is commonly observed) an object's appearing of different magnitude, even with respect to its horizontal extension, on the top of a steeple, for example, a hundred feet high, to one standing below, from what it would if placed at a hundred feet distance on a level with his eye. For it hath been shown, that the judgment we make on the magnitude of a thing, depends not

on the visible appearance alone, but also on divers other circumstances, any one of which being omitted or varied may suffice to make some alteration in our judgment. Hence, the circumstance of viewing a distant object in such a situation as is usual, and suits with the ordinary posture of the head and eyes, being omitted, and instead thereof a different situation of the object which requires a different posture of the head taking place, it is not to be wondered at, if the magnitude be judged different; but it will be demanded, why a high object should constantly appear less than an equidistant low object of the same dimensions, for so it is observed to be; it may indeed be granted that the variation of some circumstances may vary the judgment, made on the magnitude of high objects, which we are less used to look at: but it does not hence appear, why they should be judged less rather than greater? I answer, that in case the magnitude of distant objects was suggested by the extent of their visible appearance alone, and thought proportional thereto, it is certain they would then be judged much less than now they seem to be, vide Sect. LXXIX. But several circumstances concurring to form the judgment we make on the magnitude of distant objects, by means of which they appear far larger than others, whose visible appearance hath an equal or even greater extension; it follows, that upon the change or omission of any of those circumstances, which are wont to attend the vision of distant objects, and so come to influence the judgments made on their magnitude, they shall proportionably appear less than otherwise they would. For any of those things that caused an object to be thought greater, than in proportion to its visible extension, being either omitted or applied without the usual circumstances, the judgment depends more entirely on the visible extension, and consequently the object must be judged less. Thus in the present case, the situation of the thing seen being different from what it usually is in those objects we have occasion to view, and whose magnitude we observe, it follows, that the very same object, being a hundred feet high, should seem less than if it was a hundred feet off on (or nearly on) a level with the eye. What has been here set forth, seems to me to have no small share in contributing to magnify the appearance of the horizontal moon, and deserves not to be passed over in the explication of it.

LXXIV. If we attentively consider the phenomenon before us, we shall find the not discerning between the mediate and immediate objects of sight, to be the chief cause of the difficulty that occurs in the explication of it. The magnitude of the visible moon, or that which is the proper and immediate object of vision, is no greater when the moon is in the horizon, than when it is in the meridian. How comes it, therefore, to seem greater in one situation than the other? What is it can put this cheat on the

understanding? It has no other perception of the moon, than what it gets by sight: and that which is seen, is of the same extent, I say the visble appearance hath the same, or rather a less magnitude, when the moon is viewed in the horizontal, than when in the meridional position: and yet it is esteemed greater in the former than in the latter. Herein consists the difficulty, which doth vanish and admit of a most easy solution, if we consider that as the visible moon is not greater in the horizon than in the meridian, so neither is it thought to be so. It hath been already shown, that in any act of vision, the visible object absolutely, or in itself, is little taken notice of, the mind still carrying its view from that to some tangible ideas, which have been observed to be connected with it, and by that means come to be suggested by it. So that when a thing is said to appear great or small, or whatever estimate be made of the magnitude of any thing, this is meant not of the visible, but of the tangible object. This duly considered, it will be no hard matter to reconcile the seeming contradiction there is, that the moon should appear of a different bigness, the visible magnitude thereof remaining still the same. For by Sect. LVI. the very same visible extension, with a different faintness, shall suggest a different tangible extension. When therefore the horizontal moon is said to appear greater than the meridional moon, this must be understood not of a greater visible extension, but of a greater tangible or real extension, which by reason of the more than ordinary faintness of the visible appearance, is suggested to the mind along with it.

LXXV. Many attempts have been made by learned men, to account for this appearance. Gassendus, Descartes, Hobbes, and several others, have employed their thoughts on that subject; but how fruitless and unsatisfactory their endeavours have been, is sufficiently shown in the Philosophical Transactions,* where you may see their several opinions at large set forth and confuted, not without some surprise at the gross blunders that ingenious men have been forced into, by endeavouring to reconcile this appearance with the ordinary principles of optics. Since the writing of which, there hath been published in the Transactions† another paper relating to the same affair, by the celebrated Dr. Wallis, wherein he attempts to account for that phenomena, which, though it seems not to contain any thing new, or different from what had been said before by others, I shall nevertheless consider in this place.

LXXVI. His opinion, in short, is this; we judge not of the magnitude of an object by the visual angle alone, but by the visual angle in conjunction with the distance. Hence, though the angle remain the same, or even become less, yet if withal the distance seem to have been increased, the object shall appear

* Phil. Trans. Num. 187, p. 314. † Num. 187, p. 323.

greater. Now, one way whereby we estimate the distance of any thing, is by the number and extent of the intermediate objects: when therefore the moon is seen in the horizon, the variety of fields, houses, &c., together with the large prospect of the wide, extended land or sea, that lies between the eye and the utmost limb of the horizon, suggest unto the mind the idea of greater distance, and consequently magnify the appearance. And this, according to Dr. Wallis, is the true account of the extraordinary largeness attributed by the mind to the horizontal moon, at a time when the angle subtended by its diameter is not one jot greater than it used to be.

LXXVII. With reference to this opinion, not to repeat what hath been already said concerning distance, I shall only observe, first, that if the prospect of interjacent objects be that which suggests the idea of further distance, and this idea of further distance be the cause that brings into the mind the idea of greater magnitude, it should hence follow, that if one looked at the horizontal moon from behind a wall, it would appear no bigger than ordinary. For in that case, the wall interposing cuts off all that prospect of sea and land, &c., which might otherwise increase the apparent distance, and thereby the apparent magnitude of the moon. Nor will it suffice to say, the memory doth even then suggest all that extent of land, &c., which lies within the horizon; which suggestion occasions a sudden judgment of sense, that the moon is further off and larger than usual. For ask any man, who from such a station beholding the horizontal moon, shall think her greater than usual, whether he hath at that time in his mind any idea of the intermediate objects, or long tract of land that lies between his eye and the extreme edge of the horizon? And whether it be that idea which is the cause of his making the aforementioned judgment? He will, I suppose, reply in the negative, and declare the horizontal moon shall appear greater than the meridional, though he never thinks of all or any of those things that lie between him and it. Secondly, it seems impossible by this hypothesis to account for the moon's appearing in the very same situation, at one time greater than at another; which nevertheless has been shown to be very agreeable to the principles we have laid down, and receives a most easy and natural explication from them. For the further clearing up of this point, it is to be observed that what we immediately and properly see are only lights and colours in sundry situations and shades, and degrees of faintness and clearness, confusion and distinctness. All which visible objects are only in the mind; nor do they suggest aught external, whether distance or magnitude, otherwise than by habitual connexion as words do things. We are also to remark, that, beside the straining of the eyes, and beside the vivid and faint, the distinct and

confused appearances (which bearing some proportions to lines and angles, have been substituted instead of them, in the foregoing part of this treatise), there are other means which suggest both distance and magnitude; particularly, the situation of visible points, or objects, as upper or lower; the former suggesting a further distance, and greater magnitude, the latter a nearer distance, and lesser magnitude: all which is an effect only of custom and experience; there being really nothing intermediate in the line of distance, between the uppermost and lowermost, which are both equidistant, or rather at no distance from the eye, as there is also nothing in upper or lower, which by necessary connexion should suggest greater or lesser magnitude. Now, as these customary, experimental means of suggesting distance, do likewise suggest magnitude, so they suggest the one as immediately as the other. I say, they do not (vide Sect. LIII.) first suggest distance, and then leave the mind from thence to infer or compute magnitude, but suggest magnitude as immediately and directly as they suggest distance.

LXXVIII. This phenomenon of the horizontal moon is a clear instance of the insufficiency of lines and angles, for explaining the way wherein the mind perceives and estimates the magnitude of outward objects. There is nevertheless a use of computation by them, in order to determine the apparent magnitude of things, so far as they have a connexion with, and are proportional to those other ideas or perceptions, which are the true and immediate occasions that suggest to the mind the apparent magnitude of things. But this in general may, I think, be observed concerning mathematical computation in optics; that it can never be very precise and exact, since the judgments we make of the magnitude of external things do often depend on several circumstances, which are not proportionable to, or capable of being defined by lines and angles.

LXXIX. From what has been said, we may safely deduce this consequence, to wit, that a man born blind, and made to see, would at first opening of his eyes make a very different judgment of the magnitude of objects intromitted by them, from what others do. He would not consider the ideas of sight, with reference to, or as having any connexion with the ideas of touch: his view of them being entirely terminated within themselves, he can no otherwise judge them great or small, than as they contain a greater or lesser number of visible points. Now, it being certain that any visible point can cover or exclude from view only one other visible point, it follows, that whatever object intercepts the view of another, hath an equal number of visible points with it; and consequently they shall both be thought by him to have the same magnitude. Hence it is evident, one in those circumstances would judge his thumb, with which he might hide a

tower, or hinder its being seen, equal to that tower, or his hand, the interposition whereof might conceal the firmament from his view, equal to the firmament: how great an inequality soever there may, in our apprehensions, seem to be betwixt those two things, because of the customary and close connexion that has grown up in our minds between the objects of sight and touch, whereby the very different and distinct ideas of those two senses are so blended and confounded together, as to be mistaken for one and the same thing; out of which prejudice we cannot easily extricate ourselves.

LXXX. For the better explaining the nature of vision, and setting the manner wherein we perceive magnitudes in a due light, I shall proceed to make some observations concerning matters relating thereto, whereof the want of reflection, and duly separating between tangible and visible ideas, is apt to create in us mistaken and confused notions. And first, I shall observe that the *minimum visibile* is exactly equal in all beings whatsoever, that are endowed with the visive faculty. No exquisite formation of the eye, no peculiar sharpness of sight, can make it less in one creature than in another; for it not being distinguishable into parts, nor in any wise consisting of them, it must necessarily be the same to all. For suppose it otherwise, and that the *minimum visibile* of a mite, for instance, be less than the *minimum visibile* of a man; the latter therefore may by detraction of some part be made equal to the former: it doth therefore consist of parts, which is inconsistent with the notion of a *minimum visibile*, or point.

LXXXI. It will perhaps be objected that the *minimum visibile* of a man doth really and in itself contain parts whereby it surpasses that of a mite, though they are not perceivable by the man. To which I answer, the *minimum visibile* having (in like manner as all other the proper and immediate objects of sight) been shown not to have any existence without the mind of him who sees it, it follows there cannot be any part of it that is not exactly perceived, and therefore visible. Now for any object to contain several distinct visible parts, and at the same time to be a *minimum visibile*, is a manifest contradiction.

LXXXII. Of these visible points we see at all times an equal number. It is every whit as great when our view is contracted and bounded by near objects, as when it is extended to larger and remoter. For it being impossible that one *minimum visibile* should obscure or keep out of sight more than another, it is a plain consequence, that when my view is on all sides bounded by the walls of my study, I see just as many visible points as I could, in case that by the removal of the study-walls, and all other obstructions, I had a full prospect of the circumjacent fields, mountains, sea, and open firmament; for so long as

I am shut up within the walls, by their interposition, every point of the external objects is covered from my view: but each point that is seen being able to cover or exclude from sight one only other corresponding point, it follows, that whilst my sight is confined to those narrow walls, I see as many points, or *minima visibilia*, as I should were those walls away, by looking on all the external objects, whose prospect is intercepted by them. Whenever therefore we are said to have a greater prospect at one time than another, this must be understood with relation not to the proper and immediate, but the secondary and mediate objects of vision, which, as hath been shown, properly belong to the touch.

LXXXIII. The visive faculty, considered with reference to its immediate objects, may be found to labour of two defects: first, in respect of the extent or number of visible points that are at once perceivable by it, which is narrow and limited to a certain degree. It can take in at view but a certain determinate number of *minima visibilia*, beyond which it cannot extend its prospect. Secondly, our sight is defective in that its view is not only narrow, but also for the most part confused; of those things that we take in at one prospect, we can see but a few at once clearly and unconfusedly; and the more we fix our sight on any one object, by so much the darker and more indistinct shall the rest appear.

LXXXIV. Corresponding to these two defects of sight, we may imagine as many perfections, to wit, first, that of comprehending in one view a greater number of visible points; secondly, of being able to view them all equally and at once, with the utmost clearness and distinction. That those perfections are not actually in some intelligences of a different order and capacity from ours, it is impossible for us to know.

LXXXV. In neither of those two ways do microscopes contribute to the improvement of sight; for when we look through a microscope, we neither see more visible points, nor are the collateral points more distinct than when we look with the naked eye, at objects placed in a due distance. A microscope brings us as it were into a new world: it presents us with a new scene of visible objects, quite different from what we behold with the naked eye. But herein consists the most remarkable difference, to wit, that whereas the objects perceived by the eye alone, have a certain connexion with tangible objects, whereby we are taught to foresee what will ensue upon the approach or application of distant objects to the parts of our own body, which much conduceth to its preservation; there is not the like connexion between things tangible and those visible objects that are perceived by help of a fine microscope.

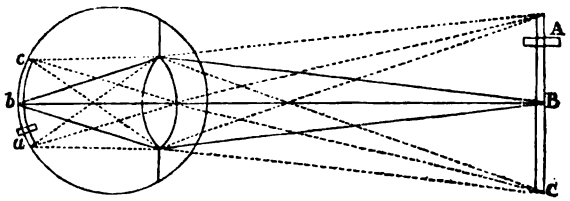
LXXXVI. Hence it is evident, that were our eyes turned into the nature of microscopes, we should not be much benefited

by the change; we should be deprived of the forementioned advantage we at present receive by the visive faculty; and have left us only the empty amusement of seeing, without any other benefit arising from it. But in that case, it will perhaps be said, our sight would be endued with a far greater sharpness and penetration than it now hath. But I would fain know wherein consists that sharpness, which is esteemed so great an excellency of sight. It is certain from what we have already shown, that the *minimum visibile* is never greater or lesser, but in all cases constantly the same: and in the case of microscopical eyes, I see only this difference, to wit, that upon the ceasing of a certain observable connexion betwixt the divers perceptions of sight and touch, which before enabled us to regulate our actions by the eye, it would now be rendered utterly unserviceable to that purpose.

LXXXVII. Upon the whole, it seems that if we consider the use and end of sight, together with the present state and circumstances of our being, we shall not find any great cause to complain of any defect or imperfection in it, or easily conceive how it could be mended. With such admirable wisdom is that faculty contrived, both for the pleasure and convenience of life.

LXXXVIII. Having finished what I intended to say, concerning the distance and magnitude of objects, I come now to treat of the manner wherein the mind perceives by sight their situation. Among the discoveries of the last age, it is reputed none of the least, that the manner of vision hath been more clearly explained than ever it had been before. There is, at this day, no one ignorant, that the pictures of external objects are painted on the *retina*, or fund of the eye. That we can see nothing which is not so painted: and that, according as the picture is more distinct or confused, so also is the perception we have of the object: but then in this explication of vision, there occurs one mighty difficulty. The objects are painted in an inverted order on the bottom of the eye: the upper part of any object being painted on the lower part of the eye, and the lower part of the object on the upper part of the eye: and so also as to right and left. Since therefore the pictures are thus inverted, it is demanded how it comes to pass, that we see the objects erect and in their natural posture?

LXXXIX. In answer to this difficulty, we are told, that the mind, perceiving an impulse of a ray of light on the upper part of the eye, considers this ray as coming in a direct line from the lower part of the object, and in like manner tracing the ray that strikes on the lower part of the eye, it is directed to the upper part of the object. Thus in the adjacent figure C the lower point of the object A B C is projected on *c* the upper part of the eye. So likewise, the highest point A is projected on *a* the



lowest part of the eye, which makes the representation *c b a* inverted: but the mind, considering the stroke that is made on *c* as coming in the straight line C *c* from the lower end of the object, and the stroke or impulse on *a* as coming in the line A *a* from the upper end of the object, is directed to make a right judgment of the situation of the object A B C, notwithstanding the picture of it is inverted. This is illustrated by conceiving a blind man, who, holding in his hands two sticks that cross each other, doth with them touch the extremities of an object, placed in a perpendicular situation. It is certain, this man will judge that to be the upper part of the object, which he touches with the stick held in the undermost hand, and that to be the lower part of the object, which he touches with the stick in his uppermost hand. This is the common explication of the erect appearance of objects, which is generally received and acquiesced in, being (as Mr. Molyneux tells us*) *allowed by all men as satisfactory.*

XC. But this account to me does not seem in any degree true. Did I perceive those impulses, decussations, and directions of the rays of light, in like manner as hath been set forth, then, indeed, it would not at first view be altogether void of probability. And there might be some pretence for the comparison of the blind man and his cross sticks. But the case is far otherwise. I know very well that I perceive no such thing. And, of consequence, I cannot thereby make an estimate of the situation of objects. I appeal to any one's experience, whether he be conscious to himself, that he thinks on the intersection made by the radious pencils, or pursues the impulses they give in right lines, whenever he perceives by sight the position of any object? To me it seems evident, that crossing and tracing of the rays, is never thought on by children, idiots, or in truth by any other, save only those who have applied themselves to the study of optics. And for the mind to judge of the situation of objects by those things, without perceiving them, or to perceive them without knowing it, is equally beyond my comprehension. Add to this, that the explaining the manner of vision by the example of

* Diopt. Par. ii. c. 7, p. 289.

cross sticks, and hunting for the object along the axes of the radious pencils, doth suppose the proper objects of sight to be perceived at a distance from us, contrary to what hath been demonstrated.

XCI. It remains, therefore, that we look for some other explication of this difficulty: and I believe it not impossible to find one, provided we examine it to the bottom, and carefully distinguish between the ideas of sight and touch; which cannot be too oft inculcated in treating of vision: but more especially throughout the consideration of this affair, we ought to carry that distinction in our thoughts: for that from want of a right understanding thereof, the difficulty of explaining erect vision seems chiefly to arise.

XCII. In order to disentangle our minds from whatever prejudices we may entertain with relation to the subject in h ad, nothing seems more apposite, than the taking into our thoughts the case of one born blind, and afterwards, when grown up, made to see. And though perhaps it may not be an easy task to divest ourselves entirely of the experience received from sight, so as to be able to put our thoughts exactly in the posture of such a one's: we must nevertheless, as far as possible, endeavour to frame true conceptions of what might reasonably be supposed to pass in his mind.

XCIII. It is certain that a man actually blind, and who had continued so from his birth, would by the sense of feeling attain to have ideas of upper and lower. By the motion of his hand he might discern the situation of any tangible object placed within his reach. That part on which he felt himself supported, or towards which he perceived his body to gravitate, he would term lower, and the contrary to this upper; and accordingly denominate whatsoever objects he touched.

XCIV. But then, whatever judgments he makes concerning the situation of objects, are confined to those only that are perceivable by touch. All those things that are intangible, and of a spiritual nature, his thoughts and desires, his passions, and in general all the modifications of his soul, to these he would never apply the terms upper and lower, except only in a metaphorical sense. He may, perhaps, by way of allusion, speak of high or low thoughts: but those terms, in their proper signification, would never be applied to any thing that was not conceived to exist without the mind. For a man born blind, and remaining in the same state, could mean nothing else by the words higher and lower, than a greater or lesser distance from the earth: which distance he would measure by the motion or application of his hand, or some other part of his body. It is, therefore, evident, that all those things which, in respect of each other, would by him be thought higher or lower, must be such as were conceived to exist without his mind, in the ambient space.

XCV. Whence it plainly follows, that such a one, if we suppose him made to see, would not at first sight think that any thing he saw was high or low, erect or inverted: for it hath been already demonstrated in Sect. XLI. that he would not think the things he perceived by sight to be at any distance from him, or without his mind. The objects to which he had hitherto been used to apply the terms up and down, high and low, were such only as affected, or were some way perceived by his touch; but the proper objects of vision make a new set of ideas, perfectly distinct and different from the former, and which can in no sort make themselves perceived by touch. There is, therefore, nothing at all that could induce him to think those terms applicable to them: nor would he ever think it, till such time as he had observed their connexion with tangible objects, and the same prejudice began to insinuate itself into his understanding, which from their infancy had grown up in the understandings of other men.

XCVI. To set this matter in a clearer light, I shall make use of an example. Suppose the above-mentioned blind person, by his touch, perceives a man to stand erect. Let us inquire into the manner of this. By the application of his hand to the several parts of a human body, he had perceived different tangible ideas, which being collected into sundry complex ones have distinct names annexed to them. Thus one combination of a certain tangible figure, bulk, and consistency of parts is called the head, another the hand, a third the foot, and so of the rest: all which complex ideas could, in his understanding, be made up only of ideas perceivable by touch. He had also by his touch obtained an idea of earth or ground, towards which he perceives the parts of his body to have a natural tendency. Now, by erect nothing more being meant, than that perpendicular position of a man, wherein his feet are nearest to the earth: if the blind person, by moving his hand over the parts of the man who stands before him, perceives the tangible ideas that compose the head, to be furthest from, and those that compose the feet to be nearest to, that other combination of tangible ideas which he calls earth: he will denominate that man erect. But if we suppose him on a sudden to receive his sight, and that he behold a man standing before him, it is evident, in that case, he would neither judge the man he sees to be erect nor inverted; for he never having known those terms applied to any other save tangible things, or which existed in the space without him, and what he sees neither being tangible, nor perceived as existing without, he could not know that in propriety of language they were applicable to it.

XCVII. Afterwards, when upon turning his head or eyes up and down to the right and left, he shall observe the visible objects to change, and shall also attain to know, that they are

called by the same names, and connected with the objects perceived by touch; then, indeed, he will come to speak of them and their situation, in the same terms that he has been used to apply to tangible things: and those that he perceives by turning up his eyes, he will call upper, and those that by turning down his eyes, he will call lower.

XCVIII. And this seems to me the true reason why he should think those objects uppermost that are painted on the lower part of his eye: for, by turning the eye up they shall be distinctly seen; as likewise those that are painted on the highest part of the eye shall be distinctly seen, by turning the eye down, and are for that reason esteemed lowest: for we have shown that to the immediate objects of sight, considered in themselves, he would not attribute the terms high and low. It must therefore be on account of some circumstances which are observed to attend them; and these, it is plain, are the actions of turning the eye up and down, which suggest a very obvious reason, why the mind should denominate the objects of sight accordingly high or low. And without this motion of the eye, this turning it up and down in order to discern different objects, doubtless, erect, inverse, and other the like terms relating to the position of tangible objects, would never have been transferred, or in any degree apprehended to belong to the ideas of sight: the mere act of seeing including nothing in it to that purpose; whereas the different situations of the eye naturally direct the mind to make a suitable judgment of the situation of objects intromitted by it.

XCIX. Further, when he has by experience learned the connexion there is between the several ideas of sight and touch, he will be able, by the perception he has of the situation of visible things in respect of one another, to make a sudden and true estimation of the situation of outward, tangible things corresponding to them. And thus it is, he shall perceive by sight the situation of external objects, which do not properly fall under that sense.

C. I know we are very prone to think, that if just made to see, we should judge of the situation of visible things as we do now: but, we are also as prone to think, that at first sight, we should in the same way apprehend the distance and magnitude of objects, as we do now: which hath been shown to be a false and groundless persuasion. And for the like reasons, the same censure may be passed on the positive assurance, that most men, before they have thought sufficiently of the matter, might have of their being able to determine by the eye, at first view, whether objects were erect or inverse.

CI. It will, perhaps, be objected to our opinion, that a man, for instance, being thought erect when his feet are next the earth, and inverted when his head is next the earth, it doth hence

follow, that by the mere act of vision, without any experience or altering the situation of the eye, we should have determined whether he were erect or inverted: for both the earth itself, and the limbs of the man who stands thereon, being equally perceived by sight, one cannot choose seeing what part of the man is nearest the earth, and what part furthest from it, i. e. whether he be erect or inverted.

CII. To which I answer, the ideas which constitute the tangible earth and man, are entirely different from those which constitute the visible earth and man. Nor was it possible, by virtue of the visive faculty alone, without superadding any experience of touch, or altering the position of the eye, ever to have known, or so much as suspected, there had been any relation or connexion between them: hence a man at first view would not denominate any thing he saw, earth, or head, or foot; and consequently, he could not tell by the mere act of vision, whether the head or feet were nearest the earth: nor, indeed, would he have thereby any thought of earth or man, erect or inverse, at all: which will be made yet more evident if we nicely observe, and make a particular comparison between the ideas of both senses.

CIII. That which I see is only variety of light and colours. That which I feel is hard or soft, hot or cold, rough or smooth. What similitude, what connexion have those ideas with these? Or how is it possible, that any one should see reason to give one and the same name to combinations of ideas so very different, before he had experienced their coexistence? We do not find there is any necessary connexion betwixt this or that tangible quality, and any colour whatsoever. And we may sometimes perceive colours, where there is nothing to be felt. All which doth make it manifest that no man, at first receiving of his sight, would know there was any agreement between this or that particular object of his sight, and any object of touch he had been already acquainted with: the colours therefore of the head, would to him no more suggest the idea of head, than they would the idea of foot.

CIV. Further, we have at large shown (vide Sect. LXIII. and LXIV.) there is no discoverable, necessary connexion, between any given visible magnitude, and any one particular tangible magnitude; but that it is entirely the result of custom and experience, and depends on foreign and accidental circumstances, that we can by the perception of visible extension inform ourselves, what may be the extension of any tangible object connected with it. Hence it is certain that neither the visible magnitude of head or foot, would bring along with them into the mind, at first opening of the eyes, the respective tangible magnitudes of those parts.

CV. By the foregoing section, it is plain the visible figure of any part of the body hath no necessary connexion with the tangible figure thereof, so as at first sight to suggest it to the mind: for figure is the termination of magnitude, whence it follows, that no visible magnitude, having in its own nature an aptness to suggest any one particular tangible magnitude, so neither can any visible figure be inseparably connected with its corresponding tangible figure: so as of itself and in a way prior to experience, it might suggest it to the understanding. This will be further evident, if we consider that what seems smooth and round to the touch, may to sight, if viewed through a microscope, seem quite otherwise.

CVI. From all which laid together and duly considered, we may clearly deduce this inference. In the first act of vision, no idea entering by the eye would have a perceivable connexion with the ideas to which the names earth, man, head, foot, &c., were annexed in the understanding of a person blind from his birth; so as in any sort to introduce them into his mind, or make themselves be called by the same names, and reputed the same things with them, as afterwards they come to be.

CVII. There doth, nevertheless, remain one difficulty, which perhaps may seem to press hard on our opinion, and deserve not to be passed over: for though it be granted that neither the colour, size, nor figure of the visible feet have any necessary connexion with the ideas that compose the tangible feet, so as to bring them at first sight into my mind, or make me in danger of confounding them before I had been used to, and for some time experienced their connexion: yet thus much seems undeniable, namely, that the number of the visible feet, being the same with that of the tangible feet, I may from hence, without any experience of sight, reasonably conclude, that they represent or are connected with the feet rather than the head. I say, it seems the idea of two visible feet will sooner suggest to the mind the idea of two tangible feet than of one head; so that the blind man, upon first reception of the visive faculty, might know which were the feet or two, and which the head or one.

CVIII. In order to get clear of this seeming difficulty, we need only observe, that diversity of visible objects doth not necessarily infer diversity of tangible objects corresponding to them. A picture painted with great variety of colours affects the touch in one uniform manner; it is therefore evident, that I do not by any necessary consecution, independent of experience, judge of the number of things tangible, from the number of things visible. I should not therefore at first opening my eyes conclude, that because I see two I shall feel two. How, therefore can I, before experience teaches me, know that the visible legs, because two, are connected with the tangible legs, or the

visible head, because one, is connected with the tangible head? The truth is, the things I see are so very different and heterogeneous from the things I feel, that the perception of the one would never have suggested the other to my thoughts, or enabled me to pass the least judgment thereon, until I had experienced their connexion.

CIX. But for a fuller illustration of this matter, it ought to be considered that number (however some may reckon it amongst the primary qualities) is nothing fixed and settled, really existing in things themselves. It is entirely the creature of the mind, considering, either an idea by itself, or any combination of ideas to which it gives one name, and so makes it pass for a unit. According as the mind variously combines its ideas, the unit varies; and as the unit, so the number, which is only a collection of units, doth also vary. We call a window one, a chimney one, and yet a house in which there are many windows, and many chimnies, hath an equal right to be called one, and many houses go to the making of one city. In these and the like instances, it is evident the *unit* constantly relates to the particular draughts the mind makes of its ideas, to which it affixes names, and wherein it includes more or less, as best suits its own ends and purposes. Whatever therefore the mind considers as one, that is a unit. Every combination of ideas is considered as one thing by the mind, and in token thereof is marked by one name. Now, this naming and combining together of ideas is perfectly arbitrary, and done by the mind in such sort, as experience shows it to be most convenient: without which, our ideas had never been collected into such sundry distinct combinations as they now are.

CX. Hence it follows, that a man born blind, and afterwards, when grown up, made to see, would not, in the first act of vision, parcel out the ideas of sight into the same distinct collections that others do, who have experienced which do regularly coexist, and are proper to be bundled up together under one name. He would not, for example, make into one complex idea, and thereby esteem and unite all those particular ideas, which constitute the visible head or foot. For there can be no reason assigned why he should do so, barely upon his seeing a man stand upright before him: there crowd into his mind the ideas which compose the visible man, in company with all the other ideas of sight perceived at the same time: but all these ideas offered at once to his view, he would not distribute into sundry distinct combinations, till such time as, by observing the motion of the parts of the man and other experiences, he comes to know which are to be separated, and which to be collected together.

CXI. From what hath been premised, it is plain the objects of sight and touch make, if I may so say, two sets of ideas

which are widely different from each other. To objects of either kind, we indifferently attribute the terms high and low, right and left, and such like, denoting the position or situation of things: but then we must well observe that the position of any object is determined with respect only to objects of the same sense. We say any object of touch is high or low, according as it is more or less distant from the tangible earth: and in like manner we denominate any object of sight high or low, in proportion as it is more or less distant from the visible earth: but to define the situation of visible things, with relation to the distance they bear from any tangible thing, or *vice versa*, this were absurd and perfectly unintelligible. For all visible things are equally in the mind, and take up no part of the external space: and consequently are equidistant from any tangible thing, which exists without the mind.

CXII. Or rather to speak truly, the proper objects of sight are at no distance, neither near nor far from any tangible thing. For if we inquire narrowly into the matter, we shall find that those things only are compared together in respect of distance, which exist after the same manner, or appertain unto the same sense. For by the distance between any two points, nothing more is meant than the number of intermediate points: if the given points are visible, the distance between them is marked out by the number of the interjacent visible points: if they are tangible, the distance between them is a line consisting of tangible points; but if they are one tangible, and the other visible, the distance between them doth neither consist of points perceivable by sight nor by touch, i. e. it is utterly inconceivable. This, perhaps, will not find an easy admission into all men's understanding: however, I should gladly be informed whether it be not true, by any one who will be at the pains to reflect a little, and apply it home to his thoughts.

CXIII. The not observing what has been delivered in the two last sections, seems to have occasioned no small part of the difficulty that occurs in the business of erect appearances. The head, which is painted nearest the earth, seems to be furthest from it; and on the other hand, the feet, which are painted furthest from the earth, are thought nearest to it. Herein lies the difficulty, which vanishes if we express the thing more clearly and free from ambiguity, thus: how comes it that, to the eye, the visible head, which is nearest the tangible earth, seems furthest from the earth, and the visible feet, which are furthest from the tangible earth, seem nearest the earth. The question being thus proposed, who sees not the difficulty is founded on a supposition, that the eye, or visive faculty, or rather the soul by means thereof, should judge of the situation of visible objects, with reference to their distance from the tangible earth? Whereas it

is evident the tangible earth is not perceived by sight: and it hath been shown in the two last preceding sections, that the location of visible objects is determined only by the distance they bear from one another; and that it is nonsense to talk of distance, far or near, between a visible and tangible thing.

CXIV. If we confine our thoughts to the proper objects of sight, the whole is plain and easy. The head is painted furthest from, and the feet nearest to the visible earth; and so they appear to be. What is there strange or unaccountable in this? Let us suppose the pictures in the fund of the eye, to be the immediate objects of the sight. The consequence is, that things should appear in the same posture they are painted in; and is it not so? The head which is seen, seems furthest from the earth which is seen; and the feet which are seen, seem nearest to the earth which is seen? and just so they are painted.

CXV. But, say you, the picture of the man is inverted, and yet the appearance is erect: I ask, what mean you by the picture of the man, or, which is the same thing, the visible man's being inverted? You tell me it is inverted, because the heels are uppermost, and the head undermost? Explain me this. You say, that by the head's being undermost, you mean that it is nearest to the earth; and by the heels being uppermost, that they are furthest from the earth. I ask again, what earth you mean? You cannot mean the earth that is painted on the eye, or the visible earth: for the picture of the head is furthest from the picture of the earth, and the picture of the feet nearest to the picture of the earth; and accordingly the visible head is furthest from the visible earth, and the visible feet nearest to it. It remains, therefore, that you mean the tangible earth, and so determine the situation of visible things with respect to tangible things: contrary to what hath been demonstrated in Sect. CXI. and CXII. The two distinct provinces of sight and touch should be considered apart, and as if their objects had no intercourse, no manner of relation to one another, in point of distance or position.

CXVI. Further, what greatly contributes to make us mistake in this matter is, that when we think of the pictures in the fund of the eye, we imagine ourselves looking on the fund of another's eye, or another looking on the fund of our own eye, and beholding the pictures painted thereon. Suppose two eyes A and B: A from some distance looking on the pictures in B sees them inverted, and for that reason concludes they are inverted in B: but this is wrong. There are projected in little on the bottom of A, the images of the pictures of, suppose man, earth, &c., which are painted on B. And besides these, the eye B itself, and the objects which environ it, together with another earth, are projected in a larger size on A. Now, by the eye A, these larger images

are deemed the true objects, and the lesser only pictures in miniature. And it is with respect to those greater images, that it determines the situation of the smaller images: so that comparing the little man with the great earth, A judges him inverted, or that the feet are furthest from, and the head nearest to the great earth. Whereas, if A compare the little man with the little earth, then he will appear erect, i. e. his head shall seem furthest from, and his feet nearest to the little earth. But we must consider that B does not see two earths as A does: it sees only what is represented by the little pictures in A, and consequently shall judge the man erect: for, in truth, the man in B is not inverted, for there the feet are next the earth; but it is the representation of it in A which is inverted, for there the head of the representation of the picture of the man in B is next the earth, and the feet furthest from the earth, meaning the earth which is without the representation of the pictures in B. For if you take the little images of the pictures in B, and consider them by themselves, and with respect only to one another, they are all erect and in their natural posture.

CXVII. Further, there lies a mistake in our imagining that the pictures of external objects are painted on the bottom of the eye. It hath been shown, there is no resemblance between the ideas of sight, and things tangible. It hath likewise been demonstrated, that the proper objects of sight do not exist without the mind. Whence it clearly follows, that the pictures painted on the bottom of the eye, are not the pictures of external objects. Let any one consult his own thoughts, and then say what affinity, what likeness there is between that certain variety and disposition of colours, which constitute the visible man, or picture of a man, and that other combination of far different ideas, sensible by touch, which compose the tangible man. But if this be the case, how come they to be accounted pictures or images, since that supposes them to copy or represent some originals or other?

CXVIII. To which I answer: in the forementioned instance, the eye A takes the little images, included within the representation of the other eye B, to be pictures or copies, whereof the archetypes are not things existing without, but the larger pictures projected on its own fund: and which by A are not thought pictures, but the originals, or true things themselves. Though if we suppose a third eye C, from a due distance to behold the fund of A, then indeed the things projected thereon, shall to C seem pictures or images, in the same sense that those projected on B do to A.

CXIX. Rightly to conceive this point, we must carefully distinguish between the ideas of sight and touch, between the visible and tangible eye: for certainly on the tangible eye, nothing either

is or seems to be painted. Again, the visible eye, as well as all other visible objects, hath been shown to exist only in the mind, which perceiving its own ideas, and comparing them together, calls some pictures in respect of others. What hath been said, being rightly comprehended and laid together, doth, I think, afford a full and genuine explication of the erect appearance of objects: which phenomenon, I must confess, I do not see how it can be explained by any theories of vision hitherto made public.

CXX. In treating of these things, the use of language is apt to occasion some obscurity and confusion, and create in us wrong ideas: for language being accommodated to the common notions and prejudices of men, it is scarce possible to deliver the naked and precise truth, without great circumlocution, impropriety, and (to an unwary reader) seeming contradictions: I do, therefore, once for all desire whoever shall think it worth his while to understand what I have written concerning vision, that he would not stick in this or that phrase, or manner of expression, but candidly collect my meaning from the whole sum and tenor of my discourse, and laying aside the words as much as possible, consider the bare notions themselves, and then judge whether they are agreeable to truth and his own experience, or no.

CXXI. We have shown the way wherein the mind by mediation of visible ideas doth perceive or apprehend the distance, magnitude, and situation of tangible objects. I come now to inquire more particularly concerning the difference between the ideas of sight and touch, which are called by the same names, and see whether there be any idea common to both senses. From what we have at large set forth and demonstrated in the foregoing parts of this treatise, it is plain there is no one selfsame numerical extension, perceived both by sight and touch; but that the particular figures and extensions perceived by sight, however they may be called by the same names, and reputed the same things, with those perceived by touch, are nevertheless different, and have an existence distinct and separate from them: so that the question is not now concerning the same numerical ideas, but whether there be any one and the same sort or species of ideas equally perceivable to both senses? or, in other words, whether extension, figure, or motion perceived by sight, are not specifically distinct from extension, figure, and motion perceived by touch?

CXXII. But before I come more particularly to discuss this matter, I find it proper to consider extension in abstract: for of this there is much talk, and I am apt to think, that when men speak of extension, as being an idea common to two senses, it is with a secret supposition, that we can single out extension from all other tangible and visible qualities, and form thereof an abstract idea, which idea they will have common both to sight and touch. We are therefore to understand by extension in abstract,

an idea of extension; for instance, a line or surface, entirely stripped of all other sensible qualities and circumstances that might determine it to any particular existence; it is neither black, nor white, nor red, nor hath it any colour at all, or any tangible quality whatsoever, and consequently it is of no finite determinate magnitude: for that which bounds or distinguishes one extension from another, is some quality or circumstance wherein they disagree.

CXXIII. Now I do not find that I can perceive, imagine, or any wise frame in my mind such an abstract idea, as is here spoken of. A line or surface, which is neither black, nor white, nor blue, nor yellow, &c., nor long, nor short, nor rough, nor smooth, nor square, nor round, &c., is perfectly incomprehensible. This I am sure of as to myself: how far the faculties of other men may reach, they best can tell.

CXXIV. It is commonly said, that the object of geometry is abstract extension; but geometry contemplates figures: now, figure is the termination of magnitude, but we have shown that extension in abstract hath no finite determinate magnitude, whence it clearly follows that it can have no figure, and consequently is not the object of geometry. It is indeed a tenet as well of the modern as of the ancient philosophers, that all general truths are concerning universal abstract ideas; without which, we are told, there could be no science, no demonstration of any general proposition in geometry. But it were no hard matter, did I think it necessary to my present purpose, to show that propositions and demonstrations in geometry might be universal, though they who make them never think of abstract general ideas of triangles or circles.

CXXV. After reiterated endeavours to apprehend the general idea of a triangle, I have found it altogether incomprehensible. And surely if any one were able to introduce that idea into my mind, it must be the author of the Essay concerning Human Understanding; he, who has so far distinguished himself from the generality of writers, by the clearness and significancy of what he says. Let us therefore see how this celebrated author describes the general, or abstract idea of a triangle. "It must be (says he) neither oblique, nor rectangular, neither equilateral, equicrural, nor scalenum; but all and none of these at once. In effect it is somewhat imperfect that cannot exist; an idea, wherein some parts of several different and inconsistent ideas are put together." Essay on Human Understanding, b. iv. c. vii. § 9. This is the idea, which he thinks needful for the enlargement of knowledge, which is the subject of mathematical demonstration, and without which we could never come to know any general proposition concerning triangles. That author acknowledges it doth "require some pains and skill to form this

general idea of a triangle," ibid. But had he called to mind what he says in another place, to wit, "that ideas of mixed modes, wherein any inconsistent ideas are put together, cannot so much as exist in the mind, i. e. be conceived." Vide b. iii. c. x. § 33, ibid. I say, had this occurred to his thoughts, it is not improbable he would have owned it above all the pains and skill he was master of, to form the above-mentioned idea of a triangle, which is made up of manifest, staring contradictions. That a man who thought so much, and laid so great a stress on clear and determinate ideas, should nevertheless talk at this rate, seems very surprising. But the wonder will lessen if it be considered, that the source whence this opinion flows, is the prolific womb which has brought forth innumerable errors and difficulties, in all parts of philosophy, and in all the sciences. But this matter, taken in its full extent, were a subject too vast and comprehensive to be insisted on in this place. And so much for extension in abstract.

CXXVI. Some, perhaps, may think pure space, vacuum, or trine dimension to be equally the object of sight and touch: but though we have a very great propension, to think the ideas of outness and space to be the immediate object of sight; yet if I mistake not, in the foregoing parts of this essay, that hath been clearly demonstrated to be a mere delusion, arising from the quick and sudden suggestion of fancy, which so closely connects the idea of distance with those of sight, that we are apt to think it is itself a proper and immediate object of that sense, till reason corrects the mistake.

CXXVII. It having been shown, that there are no abstract ideas of figure, and that it is impossible for us, by any precision of thought, to frame an idea of extension separate from all other visible and tangible qualities, which shall be common both to sight and touch: the question now remaining is, whether the particular extensions, figures, and motions, perceived by sight be of the same kind, with the particular extensions, figures, and motions, perceived by touch. In answer to which, I shall venture to lay down the following proposition: *The extension, figures, and motions, perceived by sight are specifically distinct from the ideas of touch, called by the same names, nor is there any such thing as one idea or kind of idea common to both senses.* This proposition may, without much difficulty, be collected from what hath been said in several places of this essay. But because it seems so remote from, and contrary to, the received notions and settled opinion of mankind, I shall attempt to demonstrate it more particularly, and at large, by the following arguments:—

CXXVIII. When, upon perception of an idea, I range it under this or that sort; it is because it is perceived after the same manner, or because it has a likeness or conformity with, or

affects me in the same way as the ideas of the sort I rank it under. In short, it must not be entirely new, but have something in it old, and already perceived by me: it must, I say, have so much at least, in common with the ideas I have before known and named, as to make me give it the same name with them. But it has been, if I mistake not, clearly made out, that a man born blind would not, at first reception of his sight, think the things he saw were of the same nature with the objects of touch, or had any thing in common with them; but that they were a new set of ideas, perceived in a new manner, and entirely different from all he had ever perceived before: so that he would not call them by the same name, nor repute them to be of the same sort, with any thing he had hitherto known.

CXXIX. Secondly, light and colours are allowed by all to constitute a sort or species entirely different from the ideas of touch: nor will any man, I presume, say they can make themselves perceived by that sense: but there is no other immediate object of sight besides light and colours. It is therefore a direct consequence, that there is no idea common to both senses.

CXXX. It is a prevailing opinion, even amongst those who have thought and writ most accurately concerning our ideas, and the ways whereby they enter into the understanding, that something more is perceived by sight, than barely light and colours with their variations. Mr. Locke termeth sight, "The most comprehensive of all our senses, conveying to our minds the ideas of light and colours, which are peculiar only to that sense; and also the far different ideas of space, figure, and motion." Essay on Human Understanding, b. ii. c. ix. § 9. Space or distance, we have shown, is no otherwise the object of sight than of hearing. Vide Sect. XLVI. And as for figure and extension, I leave it to any one, that shall calmly attend to his own clear and distinct ideas, to decide, whether he has any idea intromitted immediately and properly by sight, save only light and colours: or whether it be possible for him to frame in his mind a distinct abstract idea of visible extension, or figure, exclusive of all colour; and, on the other hand, whether he can conceive colour without visible extension? For my own part, I must confess, I am not able to attain so great a nicety of abstraction; in a strict sense, I see nothing but light and colours, with their several shades and variations. He who beside these doth also perceive by sight ideas far different and distinct from them, hath that faculty in a degree more perfect and comprehensive than I can pretend to. It must be owned, that by the mediation of light and colours, other far different ideas are suggested to my mind: but so they are by hearing, which, beside sounds, which are peculiar to that sense, doth by their mediation suggest not only space, figure, and motion, but also all other ideas whatsoever that can be signified by words.

CXXXI. Thirdly, it is, I think, an axiom universally received, that quantities of the same kind may be added together, and make one entire sum. Mathematicians add lines together, but they do not add a line to a solid, or conceive it as making one sum with a surface: these three kinds of quantity being thought incapable of any such mutual addition, and consequently of being compared together, in the several ways of proportion, are by them esteemed entirely disparate and heterogeneous. Now let any one try in his thoughts to add a visible line or surface to a tangible line or surface, so as to conceive them making one continued sum or whole. He that can do this, may think them homogeneous; but he that cannot must, by the foregoing axiom, think them heterogeneous: a blue and a red line I can conceive added together into one sum, and making one continued line; but to make, in my thoughts, one continued line of a visible and tangible line added together is, I find, a task far more difficult, and even insurmountable; and I leave it to the reflection and experience of every particular person to determine for himself.

CXXXII. A further confirmation of our tenet may be drawn from the solution of Mr. Molyneux's problem, published by Mr. Locke in his Essay: which I shall set down as it there lies, together with Mr. Locke's opinion of it, "Suppose a man born blind, and now adult, and taught by his touch to distinguish between a cube and a sphere of the same metal, and nighly of the same bigness, so as to tell when he felt one and the other, which is the cube and which the sphere. Suppose then the cube and sphere placed on a table, and the blind man to be made to see: Quære, Whether by his sight, before he touched them, he could now distinguish, and tell, which is the globe, which is the cube. To which the acute and judicious proposer answers: Not. For though he has obtained the experience of how a globe, how a cube affects his touch; yet he has not yet attained the experience, that what affects his touch so or so must affect his sight so or so: or that a protuberant angle in the cube, that pressed his hand unequally, shall appear to his eye, as it doth in the cube. I agree with this thinking gentleman, whom I am proud to call my friend, in his answer to this his problem; and am of opinion, that the blind man, at first sight, would not be able with certainty to say, which was the globe, which the cube, whilst he only saw them." Essay on Human Understanding, b. ii. c. ix. § 8.

CXXXIII. Now, if a square surface perceived by touch be of the same sort with a square surface perceived by sight; it is certain the blind man here mentioned might know a square surface, as soon as he saw it: it is no more but introduced into his mind, by a new inlet, an idea he has been already well acquainted with. Since therefore he is supposed to have known by his

touch, that a cube is a body terminated by square surfaces, and that a sphere is not terminated by square surfaces; upon the supposition that a visible and tangible square differ only *in numero*, it follows, that he might know, by the unerring mark of the square surfaces, which was the cube, and which not, while he only saw them. We must therefore allow, either that visible extension and figures are specifically distinct from tangible extension and figures, or else, that the solution of this problem, given by those two thoughtful and ingenious men, is wrong.

CXXXIV. Much more might be laid together in proof of the proposition I have advanced: but what has been said is, if I mistake not, sufficient to convince any one that shall yield a reasonable attention: and as for those that will not be at the pains of a little thought, no multiplication of words will ever suffice to make them understand the truth, or rightly conceive my meaning.

CXXXV. I cannot let go the above-mentioned problem without some reflection on it. It hath been made evident, that a man blind from his birth, would not, at first sight, denominate any thing he saw, by the names he had been used to appropriate to ideas of touch, vide Sect. CVI. Cube, sphere, table, are words he has known applied to things perceivable by touch, but to things perfectly intangible he never knew them applied. Those words, in their wonted application, always marked out to his mind bodies, or solid things which were perceived by the resistance they gave: but there is no solidity, no resistance or protrusion perceived by sight. In short, the ideas of sight are all new perceptions, to which there be no names annexed in his mind; he cannot therefore understand what is said to him concerning them: and to ask of the two bodies he saw placed on the table, which was the sphere, which the cube, were to him a question downright bantering and unintelligible; nothing he sees being able to suggest to his thoughts the idea of body, distance, or, in general, of any thing he had already known.

CXXXVI. It is a mistake, to think the same thing affects both sight and touch. If the same angle or square, which is the object of touch, be also the object of vision, what should hinder the blind man, at first sight, from knowing it? For though the manner wherein it affects the sight, be different from that wherein it affected his touch; yet, there being, beside this manner or circumstance, which is new and unknown, the angle or figure, which is old and known, he cannot choose but discern it.

CXXXVII. Visible figure and extension having been demonstrated to be of a nature entirely different and heterogeneous from tangible figure and extension, it remains that we inquire concerning motion. Now that visible motion is not of the same sort with tangible motion, seems to need no further proof, it being an evident corollary from what we have shown concerning

the difference there is between visible and tangible extension: but for a more full and express proof hereof, we need only observe, that one who had not yet experienced vision, would not at first sight know motion. Whence it clearly follows, that motion perceivable by sight is of a sort distinct from motion perceivable by touch. The antecedent I prove thus: by touch he could not perceive any motion, but what was up or down, to the right or left, nearer or further from him; besides these, and their several varieties or complications, it is impossible he should have any idea of motion. He would not therefore think any thing to be motion, or give the name motion to any idea, which he could not range under some or other of those particular kinds thereof. But from Sect. XCV., it is plain that by the mere act of vision, he could not know motion upwards or downwards, to the right or left, or in any other possible direction. From which I conclude, he would not know motion at all at first sight. As for the idea of motion in abstract, I shall not waste paper about it, but leave it to my reader to make the best he can of it. To me it is perfectly unintelligible.

CXXXVIII. The consideration of motion may furnish a new field for inquiry: but since the manner wherein the mind apprehends by sight the motion of tangible objects, with the various degrees thereof, may be easily collected, from what hath been said concerning the manner wherein that sense doth suggest the various distances, magnitudes, and situations, I shall not enlarge any further on this subject, but proceed to inquire what may be alleged with greatest appearance of reason, against the proposition we have shown to be true: for where there is so much prejudice to be encountered, a bare and naked demonstration of the truth will scarce suffice. We must also satisfy the scruples that men may raise in favour of their preconceived notions, show whence the mistake arises, how it came to spread, and carefully disclose and root out those false persuasions that an early prejudice might have implanted in the mind.

CXXXIX. First, therefore, it will be demanded, how visible extension and figures come to be called by the same name with tangible extension and figures, if they are not of the same kind with them? It must be something more than humour or accident, that could occasion a custom so constant and universal as this, which has obtained in all ages and nations of the world, and amongst all ranks of men, the learned as well as the illiterate.

CXL. To which I answer, we can no more argue a visible and tangible square to be of the same species, from their being called by the same name, than we can, that a tangible square and the monosyllable consisting of six letters, whereby it is marked, are of the same species because they are both called by the same name. It is customary to call written words, and the

things they signify, by the same name: for words not being regarded in their own nature, or otherwise than as they are marks of things, it had been superfluous, and beside the design of language, to have given them names distinct from those of the things marked by them. The same reason holds here also. Visible figures are the marks of tangible figures, and from Sect. LIX. it is plain, that in themselves they are little regarded, or upon any other score than for their connexion with tangible figures, which by nature they are ordained to signify. And because this language of nature does not vary in different ages or nations, hence it is, that in all times and places, visible figures are called by the same names as the respective tangible figures suggested by them, and not because they are alike, or of the same sort with them.

CXLI. But, say you, surely a tangible square is liker to a visible square, than to a visible circle: it has four angles, and as many sides; so also has the visible square, but the visible circle has no such thing, being bounded by one uniform curve, without right lines or angles, which makes it unfit to represent the tangible square, but very fit to represent the tangible circle. Whence it clearly follows, that visible figures are patterns of, or of the same species with the respective tangible figures represented by them; that they are like unto them, and of their own nature fitted to represent them, as being of the same sort; and that they are in no respect arbitrary signs, as words.

CXLII. I answer, it must be acknowledged, the visible square is fitter than the visible circle, to represent the tangible square, but then it is not because it is liker, or more of a species with it; but because the visible square contains in it several distinct parts, whereby to mark the several distinct, corresponding parts of a tangible square, whereas the visible circle doth not. The square perceived by touch, hath four distinct, equal sides, so also hath it four distinct, equal angles. It is therefore necessary, that the visible figures which shall be most proper to mark it, contain four distinct, equal parts corresponding to the four sides of the tangible square; as likewise four other distinct and equal parts, whereby to denote the four equal angles of the tangible square. And accordingly we see the visible figures contain in them distinct visible parts, answering to the distinct tangible parts of the figures signified or suggested by them.

CXLIII. But it will not hence follow, that any visible figure is like unto, or of the same species with its corresponding tangible figure, unless it be also shown, that not only the number, but also the kind of the parts be the same in both. To illustrate this, I observe that visible figures represent tangible figures, much after the same manner that written words do sounds. Now in this respect words are not arbitrary, it not being indif-

ferent, what written word stands for any sound: but it is requisite, that each word contain in it so many distinct characters, as there are variations in the sound it stands for. Thus the single letter *a* is proper to mark one simple uniform sound; and the word *adultery* is accommodated to represent the sound annexed to it, in the formation whereof, there being eight different collisions, or modifications of the air by the organs of speech, each of which produces a difference of sound, it was fit the word representing it should consist of as many distinct characters, thereby to mark each particular difference or part of the whole sound: and yet nobody, I presume, will say, the single letter *a*, or the word *adultery*, are like unto, or of the same species with the respective sounds by them represented. It is indeed arbitrary that, in general, letters of any language represent sounds at all; but when that is once agreed, it is not arbitrary what combination of letters shall represent this or that particular sound. I leave this with the reader to pursue, and apply it in his own thoughts.

CXLIV. It must be confessed that we are not so apt to confound other signs with the things signified, or to think them of the same species, as we are visible and tangible ideas. But a little consideration will show us how this may be, without our supposing them of a like nature. These signs are constant and universal; their connexion with tangible ideas has been learnt at our first entrance into the world; and ever since, almost every moment of our lives, it has been occurring to our thoughts, and fastening and striking deeper on our minds. When we observe that signs are variable, and of human institution; when we remember, there was a time they were not connected in our minds, with those things they now so readily suggest; but that their signification was learned by the slow steps of experience; this preserves us from confounding them. But when we find the same signs suggest the same things all over the world; when we know they are not of human institution, and cannot remember that we ever learned their signification, but think that at first sight they would have suggested to us the same things they do now: all this persuades us they are of the same species as the things respectively represented by them, and that it is by a natural resemblance they suggest them to our minds.

CXLV. Add to this, that whenever we make a nice survey of any object, successively directing the optic axis to each point thereof; there are certain lines and figures described by the motion of the head or eye, which being in truth perceived by feeling, do nevertheless so mix themselves, as it were, with the ideas of sight, that we can scarce think but they appertain to that sense. Again, the ideas of sight enter into the mind, several at once, more distinct and unmingled, than is usual in the other

senses beside the touch. Sounds, for example, perceived at the same instant, are apt to coalesce, if I may so say, into one sound, but we can perceive at the same time great variety of visible objects, very separate and distinct from each other. Now tangible extension being made up of several distinct coexistent parts, we may hence gather another reason, that may dispose us to imagine a likeness or analogy between the immediate objects of sight and touch. But nothing, certainly, doth more contribute to blend and confound them together, than the strict and close connexion they have with each other. We cannot open our eyes, but the ideas of distance, bodies, and tangible figures are suggested by them. So swift, and sudden, and unperceived is the transition from visible to tangible ideas, that we can scarce forbear thinking them equally the immediate object of vision.

CXLVI. The prejudice, which is grounded on these, and whatever other causes may be assigned thereof, sticks so fast, that it is impossible, without obstinate striving and labour of the mind, to get entirely clear of it. But then the reluctancy we find, in rejecting any opinion, can be no argument of its truth, to whoever considers what has been already shown, with regard to the prejudices we entertain concerning the distance, magnitude, and situation of objects; prejudices so familiar to our minds, so confirmed and inveterate, as they will hardly give way to the clearest demonstration.

CXLVII. Upon the whole, I think we may fairly conclude, that the proper objects of vision constitute a universal language of the Author of nature, whereby we are instructed how to regulate our actions, in order to attain those things that are necessary to the preservation and well-being of our bodies, as also to avoid whatever may be hurtful and destructive of them. It is by their information that we are principally guided in all the transactions and concerns of life. And the manner wherein they signify, and mark unto us the objects which are at a distance, is the same with that of languages and signs of human appointment, which do not suggest the things signified, by any likeness or identity of nature, but only by an habitual connexion, that experience has made us to observe between them.

CXLVIII. Suppose one who had always continued blind, be told by his guide, that after he has advanced so many steps, he shall come to the brink of a precipice, or be stopped by a wall; must not this to him seem very admirable and surprising? He cannot conceive how it is possible for mortals to frame such predictions as these, which to him would seem as strange and unaccountable, as prophecy doth to others. Even they who are blessed with the visive faculty, may (though familiarity make it less observed) find therein sufficient cause of admiration. The wonderful art and contrivance wherewith it is adjusted to those ends

and purposes for which it was apparently designed, the vast extent, number, and variety of objects that are at once with so much ease, and quickness, and pleasure suggested by it: all these afford subject for much and pleasing speculation, and may, if any thing, give us some glimmering, analogous prenotion of things, which are placed beyond the certain discovery and comprehension of our present state.

CXLIX. I do not design to trouble myself with drawing corollaries from the doctrines I have hitherto laid down. If it bears the test, others may, so far as they shall think convenient, employ their thoughts in extending it further, and applying it to whatever purposes it may be subservient to: only, I cannot forbear making some inquiry concerning the object of geometry, which the subject we have been upon doth naturally lead one to. We have shown there is no such idea as that of extension in abstract, and that there are two kinds of sensible extension and figures, which are entirely distinct and heterogeneous from each other. Now, it is natural to inquire which of these is the object of geometry.

CL. Some things there are, which at first sight incline one to think geometry conversant about visible extension. The constant use of the eyes, both in the practical and speculative parts of that science, doth very much induce us thereto. It would, without doubt, seem odd to a mathematician to go about to convince him, the diagrams he saw upon paper were not the figures, or even the likeness of the figures, which make the subject of the demonstration. The contrary being held an unquestionable truth, not only by mathematicians, but also by those who apply themselves more particularly to the study of logic; I mean, who consider the nature of science, certainty, and demonstration: it being by them assigned as one reason of the extraordinary clearness and evidence of geometry, that in this science the reasonings are free from those inconveniencies which attend the use of arbitrary signs, the very ideas themselves being copied out, and exposed to view upon paper. But, by the bye, how well this agrees with what they likewise assert of abstract ideas, being the object of geometrical demonstration, I leave to be considered.

CLI. To come to a resolution in this point, we need only observe what hath been said in Sect. LIX., LX., LXI., where it is shown that visible extensions in themselves are little regarded, and have no settled determinate greatness, and that men measure altogether by the application of tangible extension to tangible extension. All which makes it evident, that visible extension and figures are not the object of geometry.

CLII. It is therefore plain that visible figures are of the same use in geometry, that words are; and the one may as well be accounted the object of that science, as the other; neither of them

being any otherwise concerned therein, than as they represent or suggest to the mind the particular tangible figures connected with them. There is indeed this difference between the signification of tangible figures by visible figures, and of ideas by words: that whereas the latter is variable and uncertain, depending altogether on the arbitrary appointment of men, the former is fixed and immutably the same in all times and places. A visible square, for instance, suggests to the mind the same tangible figure in Europe, that it doth in America. Hence it is that the voice of the Author of nature, which speaks to our eyes, is not liable to that misinterpretation and ambiguity, that languages of human contrivance are unavoidably subject to.

CLIII. Though what has been said may suffice to show what ought to be determined, with relation to the object of geometry; I shall nevertheless, for the fuller illustration thereof, consider the case of an intelligence, or unbodied spirit, which is supposed to see perfectly well, i. e. to have a clear perception of the proper and immediate objects of sight, but to have no sense of touch. Whether there be any such being in nature or no, is beside my purpose to inquire. It sufficeth, that the supposition contains no contradiction in it. Let us now examine, what proficiency such a one may be able to make in geometry. Which speculation will lead us more clearly to see, whether the ideas of sight can possibly be the object of that science.

CLIV. First, then, it is certain the aforesaid intelligence could have no idea of a solid, or quantity of three dimensions, which followeth from its not having any idea of distance. We indeed are prone to think, that we have by sight the ideas of space and solids, which ariseth from our imagining that we do, strictly speaking, see distance, and some parts of an object at a greater distance than others, which hath been demonstrated to be the effect of the experience we have had, what ideas of touch are connected with such and such ideas attending vision: but the intelligence here spoken of is supposed to have no experience of touch. He would not, therefore, judge as we do, nor have any idea of distance, outness, or profundity, nor consequently of space or body, either immediately or by suggestion. Whence it is plain, he can have no notion of those parts of geometry which relate to the mensuration of solids, and their convex or concave surfaces, and contemplate the properties of lines generated by the section of a solid; the conceiving of any part whereof, is beyond the reach of his faculties.

CLV. Further, he cannot comprehend the manner wherein geometers describe a right line or circle; the rule and compass, with their use, being things of which it is impossible he should have any notion: nor is it an easier matter for him to conceive the placing of one plane or angle on another, in order to prove

their equality: since that supposeth some idea of distance, or external space. All which makes it evident, our pure intelligence could never attain to know so much as the first elements of plane geometry. And perhaps, upon a nice inquiry, it will be found, he cannot even have an idea of plane figures any more than he can of solids; since some idea of distance is necessary, to form the idea of a geometrical plane, as will appear to whoever shall reflect a little on it.

CLVI. All that is properly perceived by the visive faculty amounts to no more than colours with their variations, and different proportions of light and shade: but the perpetual mutability and fleetingness of those immediate objects of sight, render them incapable of being managed after the manner of geometrical figures; nor is it in any degree useful that they should. It is true, there are divers of them perceived at once; and more of some, and less of others: but accurately to compute their magnitude, and assign precise determinate proportions, between things so variable and inconstant, if we suppose it possible to be done, must yet be a very trifling and insignificant labour.

CLVII. I must confess, it seems to be the opinion of some ingenious men, that flat or plane figures are immediate objects of sight, though they acknowledge solids are not. And this opinion of theirs is grounded on what is observed in painting, wherein (say they) the ideas immediately imprinted on the mind are only of planes variously coloured, which by a sudden act of the judgment are changed into solids: but, with a little attention we shall find the planes here mentioned, as the immediate objects of sight, are not visible, but tangible planes. For when we say that pictures are planes, we mean thereby, that they appear to the touch smooth and uniform. But then this smoothness and uniformity, or, in other words, this planeness of the picture, is not perceived immediately by vision: for it appeareth to the eye various and multiform.

CLVIII. From all which we may conclude, that planes are no more the immediate object of sight than solids. What we strictly see are not solids, nor yet planes variously coloured; they are only diversity of colours. And some of these suggest to the mind solids, and others plane figures; just as they have been experienced to be connected with the one, or the other: so that we see planes in the same way that we see solids; both being equally suggested by the immediate objects of sight, which accordingly are themselves denominated planes and solids: but though they are called by the same names with the things marked by them, they are nevertheless of a nature entirely different, as hath been demonstrated.

CLIX. What hath been said is, if I mistake not, sufficient to decide the question we propose to examine concerning the ability

of a pure spirit, such as we have described, to know geometry. It is, indeed, no easy matter for us to enter precisely into the thoughts of such an intelligence; because we cannot, without great pains, cleverly separate and disentangle in our thoughts the proper objects of sight from those of touch which are connected with them. This, indeed, in a complete degree, seems scarce possible to be performed; which will not seem strange to us, if we consider how hard it is, for any one to hear the words of his native language pronounced in his ears without understanding them. Though he endeavour to disunite the meaning from the sound, it will nevertheless intrude into his thoughts, and he shall find it extreme difficult, if not impossible, to put himself exactly in the posture of a foreigner, that never learned the language, so as to be affected barely with the sounds themselves, and not perceive the signification annexed to them.

CLX. By this time, I suppose, it is clear that neither abstract nor visible extension makes the object of geometry; the not discerning of which may, perhaps, have created some difficulty and useless labour in mathematics. Sure I am, that somewhat relating thereto has occurred to my thoughts, which, though after the most anxious and repeated examination I am forced to think it true, doth, nevertheless, seem so far out of the common road of geometry, that I know not whether it may not be thought presumption, if I should make it public in an age, wherein that science hath received such mighty improvements by new methods; great part whereof, as well as of the ancient discoveries, may perhaps lose their reputation, and much of that ardour with which men study the abstruse and fine geometry be abated, if what to me, and those few to whom I have imparted it, seems evidently true, should really prove to be so.

ALCIPHRON:

OR

THE MINUTE PHILOSOPHER:

IN SEVEN DIALOGUES;

CONTAINING

AN APOLOGY FOR THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION, AGAINST THOSE WHO ARE CALLED FREE-THINKERS.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The author's design being to consider the free-thinker in the various lights of atheist, libertine, enthusiast, scorner, critic, metaphysician, fatalist, and sceptic, it must not therefore be imagined, that every one of these characters agrees with every individual free-thinker; no more being implied, than that each part agrees with some or other of the sect. There may possibly be a reader who shall think the character of atheist agrees with none; but though it hath been often said, there is no such thing as a speculative atheist; yet we must allow, there are several atheists who pretend to speculation. This the author knows to be true; and is well assured, that one of the most noted writers against Christianity in our times, declared, he had found out a demonstration against the being of a God. And he doubts not, whoever will be at the pains to inform himself, by a general conversation, as well as books, of the principles and tenets of our modern free-thinkers, will see too much cause to be persuaded, that nothing in the ensuing characters is beyond the life.

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THE MINUTE PHILOSOPHER.

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I. I flattered himself, Theages, that before this time I might have been able to have sent you an agreeable account of the success of the affair, which brought me into this remote corner of the country. But instead of this, I should now give you the detail of its miscarriage, if I did not rather choose to entertain you with some amusing incidents, which have helped to make me easy under a circumstance I could neither obviate nor foresee. Events are not in our power; but it always is, to make a good use even of the very worst. And I must needs own, the the course and event of this affair gave opportunity for reflections, that make me some amends for a great loss of time, pains, and expense. A life of action, which takes its issue from the counsels, passions, and views of other men, if it doth not draw a man to imitate, will at least teach him to observe. And a mind at liberty to reflect on its own observations, if it produce nothing useful to the world, seldom fails of entertainment to itself. For several months past I have enjoyed such liberty and leisure in this distant retreat, far beyond the verge of that great whirlpool of business, faction, and pleasure, which is called the world. And a retreat in itself agreeable, after a long scene of trouble and disquiet, was made much more so by the conversation and good qualities of my host Euphranor, who unites in his own person the philosopher and the farmer, two characters not so inconsistent in nature as by custom they seem to be. Euphranor, from the time he left the university, hath lived in this small town, where he is possessed of a convenient house with a hundred acres of land adjoining to it; which being improved by his own labour, yield him a plentiful subsistence. He hath a good col-

lection, chiefly of old books, left him by a clergyman his uncle, under whose care he was brought up. And the business of his farm doth not hinder him from making good use of it. He hath read much, and thought more; his health and strength of body enabling him the better to bear fatigue of mind. He is of opinion that he could not carry on his studies with more advantage in the closet than the field, where his mind is seldom idle while he prunes the trees, follows the plough, or looks after his flocks. In the house of this honest friend I became acquainted with Crito, a neighbouring gentleman of distinguished merit and estate, who lives in great friendship with Euphranor. Last summer, Crito, whose parish church is in our town, dining on a Sunday at Euphranor's, I happened to inquire after his guests, whom we had seen at church with him the Sunday before. They are both well, said Crito, but, having once occasionally conformed, to see what sort of assembly our parish could afford, they had no further curiosity to gratify at church, and so chose to stay at home. How, said Euphranor, are they then dissenters? No, replied Crito, they are free-thinkers. Euphranor, who had never met with any of this species or sect of men, and but little of their writings, showed a great desire to know their principles or system. That is more, said Crito, than I will undertake to tell you. Their writers are of different opinions. Some go further, and explain themselves more freely than others. But the current general notions of the sect are best learned from conversation with those who profess themselves of it. Your curiosity may now be satisfied, if you and Dion would spend a week at my house with these gentlemen, who seem very ready to declare and propagate their opinions. Alciphron is above forty, and no stranger either to men or books. I knew him first at the Temple, which, upon an estate's falling to him, he quitted, to travel through the polite parts of Europe. Since his return he hath lived in the amusements of the town, which, being grown stale and tasteless to his palate, have flung him into a sort of splenetic indolence. The young gentleman, Lysicles, is a near kinsman of mine, one of lively parts, and a general insight into letters, who, after having passed the forms of education, and seen a little of the world, fell into an intimacy with men of pleasure, and free-thinkers, I am afraid much to the damage of his constitution and his fortune. But what I most regret, is the corruption of his mind by a set of pernicious principles, which, having been observed to survive the passions of youth, forestal even the remote hopes of amendment. They are both men of fashion, and would be agreeable enough, if they did not fancy themselves free-thinkers. But this, to speak the truth, has given them a certain air and manner, which a little too visibly declare they think themselves wiser than the rest of the world. I should

therefore be not at all displeased if my guests met with their match, where they least expected it, in a country farmer. I shall not, replied Euphranor, pretend to any more than barely to inform myself of their principles and opinions. For this end I propose to-morrow to set a week's task to my labourers, and accept your invitation, if Dion thinks good. To which I gave consent. Meanwhile, said Crito, I shall prepare my guests, and let them know that an honest neighbour hath a mind to discourse them on the subject of their free-thinking. And if I am not much mistaken, they will please themselves with the prospect of leaving a convert behind them, even in a country village. Next morning Euphranor rose early, and spent the forenoon in ordering his affairs. After dinner we took our walk to Crito's, which lay through half a dozen pleasant fields planted round with plane-trees, that are very common in this part of the country. We walked under the delicious shade of these trees for about an hour before we came to Crito's house, which stands in the middle of a small park, beautified with two fine groves of oak and walnut, and a winding stream of sweet and clear water. We met a servant at the door with a small basket of fruit which he was carrying into a grove, where he said his master was with the two strangers. We found them all three sitting under a shade. And after the usual forms at first meeting, Euphranor and I sat down by them. Our conversation began upon the beauty of this rural scene, the fine season of the year, and some late improvements which had been made in the adjacent country by new methods of agriculture. Whence Alciphron took occasion to observe, that the most valuable improvements came latest. I should have small temptation, said he, to live where men have neither polished manners nor improved minds, though the face of the country were ever so well improved. But I have long observed, that there is a gradual progress in human affairs. The first care of mankind is to supply the cravings of nature; in the next place they study the conveniences and comforts of life. But the subduing prejudices, and acquiring true knowledge, that Herculean labour is the last, being what demands the most perfect abilities, and to which all other advantages are preparative. Right, said Euphranor, Alciphron hath touched our true defect. It was always my opinion, that as soon as we had provided subsistence for the body, our next care should be to improve the mind. But the desire of wealth steps between and engrosseth men's thoughts.

II. *Alc.* Thought is that which we are told distinguisheth man from beast; and freedom of thought makes as great a difference between man and man. It is to the noble assertors of this privilege and perfection of human kind, the free-thinkers I mean, who have sprung up and multiplied of late years, that we are indebted

for all those important discoveries, that ocean of light which hath broke in and made its way, in spite of slavery and superstition. Euphranor, who is a sincere enemy to both, testified a great esteem for those worthies who had preserved their country from being ruined by them, having spread so much light and knowledge over the land. He added, that he liked the name and character of a free-thinker: but in his sense of the word, every honest inquirer after truth in any age or country was entitled to it. He therefore desired to know what this sect was that Alciphron had spoken of as newly sprung up; what were their tenets; what were their discoveries; and wherein they employed themselves, for the benefit of mankind. Of all which, he should think himself obliged, if Alciphron would inform him. That I shall very easily, replied Alciphron, for I profess myself one of the number, and my most intimate friends are some of the most considerable among them. And perceiving that Euphranor heard him with respect, he proceeded very fluently. You must know, said he, that the mind of man may be fitly compared to a piece of land. What stubbing, ploughing, digging, and harrowing is to the one, that thinking, reflecting, examining is to the other. Each hath its proper culture; and as land that is suffered to lie waste and wild for a long tract of time will be overspread with brushwood, brambles, thorns, and such vegetables which have neither use nor beauty; even so there will not fail to sprout up in a neglected, uncultivated mind, a great number of prejudices and absurd opinions, which owe their origin partly to the soil itself, the passions and imperfections of the mind of man, and partly to those seeds which chance to be scattered in it by every wind of doctrine, which the cunning of statesmen, the singularity of pedants, the superstition of fools, or the imposture of priests shall raise. Represent to yourself the man of mind, or human nature in general, that for so many ages had lain obnoxious to the frauds of designing, and the follies of weak men; how it must be overrun with prejudices and errors, what firm and deep roots they must have taken, and consequently how difficult a task it must be to extirpate them. And yet this work, no less difficult than glorious, is the employment of the modern free-thinkers. Alciphron having said this made a pause, and looked round on the company. Truly, said I, a very laudable undertaking! We think, said Euphranor, that it is praiseworthy to clear and subdue the earth, to tame brute animals, to fashion the outsides of men, provide sustenance for their bodies, and cure their maladies. But what is all this in comparison of that most excellent and useful undertaking to free mankind from their errors, and to improve and adorn their minds? For things of less merit towards the world, altars have been raised, and temples built, in ancient times. Too many in our

days, replied Alciphron, are such fools as not to know their best benefactors from their worst enemies. They have a blind respect for those who enslave them, and look upon their deliverers as a dangerous sort of men that would undermine received principles and opinions. *Euph.* It were a great pity such worthy ingenious men should meet with any discouragement. For my part I should think a man, who spent his time in such a painful, impartial search after truth, a better friend to mankind than the greatest statesman or hero, the advantage of whose labours is confined to a little part of the world, and a short space of time, whereas a ray of truth may enlighten the whole world and extend to future ages. *Alc.* It will be some time, I fear, before the common herd think as you do. But the better sort, the men of parts and polite education, pay a due regard to the patrons of light and truth.

III. *Euph.* The clergy, no doubt, are on all occasions ready to forward and applaud your worthy endeavours. Upon hearing this Lysicles could hardly refrain from laughing. And Alciphron with an air of pity told Euphranor, that he perceived he was unacquainted with the real character of those men. For, saith he, you must know that of all men living they are our greatest enemies. If it were possible, they would extinguish the very light of nature, turn the world into a dungeon, and keep mankind for ever in chains and darkness. *Euph.* I never imagined any thing like this of our protestant clergy, particularly those of the established church, whom, if I may be allowed to judge by what I have seen of them and their writings, I should have thought lovers of learning and useful knowledge. *Alc.* Take my word for it, priests of all religions are the same: wherever there are priests there will be priestcraft; and wherever there is priestcraft, there will be a persecuting spirit, which they never fail to exert to the utmost of their power against all those who have the courage to think for themselves, and will not submit to be hoodwinked and manacled by their reverend leaders. Those great masters of pedantry and jargon have coined several systems, which are all equally true, and of equal importance to the world. The contending sects are each alike fond of their own, and alike prone to discharge their fury upon all who dissent from them. Cruelty and ambition being the darling vices of priests and churchmen all the world over, they endeavour in all countries to get an ascendant over the rest of mankind; and the magistrate having a joint interest with the priest in subduing, amusing, and scaring the people, too often lends a hand to the hierarchy, who never think their authority and possessions secure, so long as those who differ from them in opinion are allowed to partake even in the common rights belonging to their birth or species. To represent the matter in a true light, figure

to yourselves a monster or spectre made up of superstition and enthusiasm, the joint issue of statecraft and priestcraft, rattling chains in one hand, and with the other brandishing a flaming sword over the land, and menacing destruction to all who shall dare to follow the dictates of reason and common sense. Do but consider this, and then say if there was not danger as well as difficulty in our undertaking. Yet, such is the generous ardour that truth inspires, our free-thinkers are neither overcome by the one nor daunted by the other. In spite of both we have already made so many proselytes among the better sort, and their numbers increase so fast, that we hope we shall be able to carry all before us, beat down the bulwarks of all tyranny, secular or ecclesiastical, break the fetters and chains of our countrymen, and restore the original inherent rights, liberties, and prerogatives of mankind. Euphranor heard this discourse with his mouth open and his eyes fixed upon Alciphron, who, having uttered it with no small emotion, stopped to draw breath and recover himself; but, finding that nobody made answer, he resumed the thread of his discourse, and, turning to Euphranor, spoke in a lower note what follows. The more innocent and honest a man is, the more liable is he to be imposed on by the specious pretences of other men. You have probably met with certain writings of our divines that treat of grace, virtue, goodness, and such matters fit to amuse and deceive a simple, honest mind. But believe me when I tell you, they are all at bottom (however they may gild their designs) united by one common principle in the same interest. I will not deny there may be here and there a poor half-witted man that means no mischief; but this I will be bold to say, that all the men of sense among them are true at bottom to these three pursuits of ambition, avarice, and revenge.

IV. While Alciphron was speaking, a servant came to tell him and Lysicles, that some men who were going to London waited to receive their orders. Whereupon they both rose up, and went towards the house. They were no sooner gone, but Euphranor, addressing himself to Crito, said, he believed that poor gentleman had been a great sufferer for his free-thinking, for that he seemed to express himself with the passion and resentment natural to men who have received very bad usage. I believe no such thing, answered Crito, but have often observed those of his sect run into two faults of conversation, declaiming and bantering, just as the tragic or the comic humour prevails. Sometimes they work themselves into high passions, and are frightened at spectres of their own raising. In those fits every country curate passes for an inquisitor. At other times they affect a sly, facetious manner, making use of hints and allusions, expressing little, insinuating much, and upon the whole seeming

to divert themselves with the subject and their adversaries. But if you would know their opinions, you must make them speak out and keep close to the point. Persecution for free-thinking is a topic they are apt to enlarge on, though without any just cause, every one being at full liberty to think what he pleases, there being no such thing in England that I know as persecution for opinion, sentiment, or thought. But in every country, I suppose, some care is taken to restrain petulant speech, and, whatever men's inward thoughts may be, to discourage an outward contempt of what the public esteemeth sacred. Whether this care in England hath of late been so excessive, as to distress the subjects of this once free and easy government, whether the free-thinkers can truly complain of any hardship upon the score of conscience or opinion, you will better be able to judge, when you hear from themselves an account of the numbers, progress, and notions of their sect; which I doubt not they will communicate fully and freely, provided nobody present seem shocked or offended: for in that case it is possible good manners may put them upon some reserve. Oh! said Euphranor, I am never angry with any man for his opinion; whether he be Jew, Turk, or idolater, he may speak his mind freely to me without fear of offending. I should even be glad to hear what he hath to say, provided he saith it in an ingenuous, candid manner. Whoever digs in the mine of truth I look on as my fellow-labourer: but if, while I am taking true pains, he diverts himself with teasing me and flinging dust in mine eyes, I shall soon be tired of him.

V. In the meantime Alciphron and Lysicles, having despatched what they went about, returned to us. Lysicles sat down where he had been before. But Alciphron stood over against us, with his arms folded across, and his head reclined on the left shoulder, in the posture of a man meditating. We sat silent, not to disturb his thoughts; and after two or three minutes he uttered these words, "Oh truth! oh liberty!" after which he remained musing as before. Upon this Euphranor took the freedom to interrupt him. Alciphron, said he, it is not fair to spend your time in soliloquies. The conversation of learned and knowing men is rarely to be met with in this corner, and the opportunity you have put into my hands I value too much not to make the best use of it. *Alc.* Are you then in earnest a votary of truth, and is it possible you should bear the liberty of a fair inquiry? *Euph.* It is what I desire of all things. *Alc.* What! upon every subject? upon the notions you first sucked in with your milk, and which have been ever since nursed by parents, pastors, tutors, religious assemblies, books of devotion, and such methods of prepossessing men's minds. *Euph.* I love information upon all subjects that come in my way, and especially upon those that are most important. *Alc.* If then you are in

earnest, hold fair and stand firm, while I probe your prejudices and extirpate your principles.

Dum veteres avias tibi de pulmone revello.

Having said thus, Alciphron knit his brows and made a short pause, after which he proceeded in the following manner. If we are at the pains to dive and penetrate into the bottom of things, and analyze opinions into their first principles, we shall find that those opinions which are thought of greatest consequence have the slightest original, being derived either from the casual customs of the country where we live, or from early instruction instilled into our tender minds, before we are able to discern between right and wrong, true and false. The vulgar (by whom I understand all those who do not make a free use of their reason) are apt to take these prejudices for things sacred and unquestionable, believing them to be imprinted on the hearts of men by God himself, or conveyed by revelation from heaven, or to carry with them so great light and evidence as must force an assent without any inquiry or examination. Thus the shallow vulgar have their heads furnished with sundry conceits, principles, and doctrines, religious, moral, and political, all which they maintain with a zeal proportionable to their want of reason. On the other hand, those who duly employ their faculties in the search of truth, take especial care to weed out of their minds, and extirpate all such notions or prejudices as were planted in them before they arrived at the free and entire use of reason. This difficult task hath been successfully performed by our modern free-thinkers, who have not only dissected with great sagacity the received systems, and traced every established prejudice to the fountain-head, the true and genuine motives of assent: but also, having been able to embrace in one comprehensive view the several parts and ages of the world, they observed a wonderful variety of customs and rites, of institutions religious and civil, of notions and opinions very unlike and even contrary one to another: a certain sign they cannot all be true. And yet they are all maintained by their several partizans with the same positive air and warm zeal, and, if examined, will be found to bottom on one and the same foundation, the strength of prejudice. By the help of these remarks and discoveries, they have broken through the bands of popular custom, and, having freed themselves from imposture, do now generously lend a hand to their fellow-subjects, to lead them into the same paths of light and liberty. Thus, gentlemen, I have given you a summary account of the views and endeavours of those men who are called free-thinkers. If in the course of what I have said or shall say hereafter, there be some things contrary to your preconceived opinions, and therefore shocking and disagreeable, you will pardon the freedom and plain-

ness of a philosopher, and consider that, whatever displeasure I give you of that kind, I do it in strict regard to truth and obedience to your own commands. I am very sensible, that eyes long kept in the dark cannot bear a sudden view of noon-day light, but must be brought to it by degrees. It is for this reason, the ingenious gentlemen of our profession are accustomed to proceed gradually, beginning with those prejudices to which men have the least attachment, and thence proceeding to undermine the rest by slow and insensible degrees, till they have demolished the whole fabric of human folly and superstition. But the little time I can propose to spend here obligeth me to take a shorter course, and be more direct and plain than possibly may be thought to suit with prudence and good manners. Upon this, we assured him he was at full liberty to speak his mind of things, persons, and opinions, without the least reserve. It is a liberty, replied Alciphron, that we free-thinkers are equally willing to give and take. We love to call things by their right names, and cannot endure that truth should suffer through complaisance. Let us therefore lay it down for a preliminary, that no offence be taken at any thing whatsoever shall be said on either side. To which we all agreed.

VI. In order then, said Alciphron, to find out the truth, we will suppose that I am bred up, for instance, in the church of England. When I come to maturity of judgment and reflect on the particular worship and opinions of this church, I do not remember when or by what means they first took possession of my mind, but there I find them from time immemorial. Then casting an eye on the education of children, from whence I can make a judgment of my own, I observe they are instructed in religious matters before they can reason about them, and consequently that all such instruction is nothing else but filling the tender mind of a child with prejudices. I do therefore reject all those religious notions, which I consider as the other follies of my childhood. I am confirmed in this way of thinking, when I look abroad into the world, where I observe papists, and several sects of dissenters, which do all agree in a general profession of belief in Christ, but differ vastly one from another in the particulars of faith and worship. I then enlarge my view so as to take in Jews and Mahometans, between whom and the Christians I perceive indeed some small agreement in the belief of one God; but then they have each their distinct laws and revelations, for which they express the same regard. But extending my view still further to heathenish and idolatrous nations, I discover an endless variety, not only in particular opinions and modes of worship, but even in the very notion of a deity, wherein they widely differ one from another, and from all the forementioned sects. Upon the whole, instead of truth simple and uniform, I

perceive nothing but discord, opposition, and wild pretensions, all springing from the same source, to wit, the prejudice of education. From such reasonings and reflections as these, thinking men have concluded that all religions are alike false and fabulous. One is a Christian, another a Jew, a third a Mahometan, a fourth an idolatrous Gentile, but all from one and the same reason, because they happen to be bred up each in his respective sect. In the same manner, therefore, as each of these contending parties condemns the rest, so an unprejudiced stander-by will condemn and reject them all together, observing that they all draw their origin from the same fallacious principle, and are carried on by the same artifice to answer the same ends of the priest and the magistrate.

VII. *Euph.* You hold then, that the magistrate concurs with the priest in imposing on the people. *Alc.* I do; and so must every one who considers things in a true light. For you must know, the magistrate's principal aim is to keep the people under him in awe. Now the public eye restrains men from open offences against the laws and government. But to prevent secret transgressions, a magistrate finds it expedient, that men should believe there is an eye of providence watching over their private actions and designs. And, to intimidate those who might otherwise be drawn into crimes by the prospect of pleasure and profit, he gives them to understand, that whoever escapes punishment in this life will be sure to find it in the next; and that so heavy and lasting, as infinitely to overbalance the pleasure and profit accruing from his crimes. Hence the belief of a God, the immortality of the soul, and a future state of rewards and punishments have been esteemed useful engines of government. And to the end that these notional airy doctrines might make a sensible impression, and be retained on the minds of men, skilful rulers have in the several civilized nations of the earth devised temples, sacrifices, churches, rites, ceremonies, habits, music, prayer, preaching, and the like spiritual trumpery, whereby the priest maketh temporal gains, and the magistrate findeth his account in frightening and subduing the people. This is the original of the combination between church and state, of religion by law established, of rights, immunities, and incomes of priests all over the world: there being no government but would have you fear God, that you may honour the king or civil power. And you will ever observe that politic princes keep up a good understanding with their clergy, to the end that they in return, by inculcating religion and loyalty into the minds of the people, may render them tame, timorous, and slavish. Crito and I heard this discourse of Alciphron with the utmost attention, though without any appearance of surprise, there being indeed nothing in it to us new or unexpected. But Euphranor, who had never

before been present at such conversation, could not help showing some astonishment; which Lysicles observing, asked him with a lively air, how he liked Alciphron's lecture. It is, said he, the first I believe that you ever heard of the kind, and requireth a strong stomach to digest it. *Euph.* I will own to you that my digestion is none of the quickest; but it hath sometimes, by degrees, been able to master things which at first appeared indigestible. At present I admire the free spirit and eloquence of Alciphron: but, to speak the truth, I am rather astonished, than convinced of the truth of his opinions. How (said he, turning to Alciphron), is it then possible you should not believe the being of a God? *Alc.* To be plain with you, I do not.

VIII. But this is what I foresaw, a flood of light let in at once upon the mind being apt to dazzle and disorder, rather than enlighten it. Was I not pinched in time, the regular way would be to have begun with the circumstantials of religion; next to have attacked the mysteries of Christianity; after that proceeded to the practical doctrines; and in the last place to have extirpated that which, of all other religious prejudices, being the first taught, and basis of the rest, hath taken the deepest root in our minds, I mean the belief of a God. I do not wonder it sticks with you, having known several very ingenious men who found it difficult to free themselves from this prejudice. *Euph.* All men have not the same alacrity and vigour in thinking: for my own part, I find it a hard matter to keep pace with you. *Alc.* To help you, I will go a little way back, and resume the thread of my reasoning. First, I must acquaint you, that having applied my mind to contemplate the idea of truth, I discovered it to be of a stable, permanent, and uniform nature; not various and changeable, like modes or fashions, and things depending on fancy. In the next place, having observed several sects and subdivisions of sects espousing very different and contrary opinions, and yet all professing Christianity, I rejected those points wherein they differed, retaining only that which was agreed to by all; and so became latitudinarian. Having afterwards, upon a more enlarged view of things, perceived that Christians, Jews, and Mahometans had each their different systems of faith, agreeing only in the belief of one God, I became a deist. Lastly, extending my view to all the other various nations which inhabit this globe, and finding they agreed in no one point of faith, but differed one from another, as well as from the forementioned sects, even in the notion of a God, in which there is as great diversity as in the methods of worship, I thereupon became an atheist: it being my opinion that a man of courage and sense should follow his argument wherever it leads him, and that nothing is more ridiculous than to be a free-thinker by halves. I approve the man who makes thorough work, and, not content with

lopping off the branches, extirpates the very root from which they sprung.

IX. Atheism therefore, that bugbear of women and fools, is the very top and perfection of free-thinking. It is the grand *arcanum* to which a true genius naturally riseth, by a certain climax or gradation of thought, and without which he can never possess his soul in absolute liberty and repose. For your thorough conviction in this main article, do but examine the notion of a God with the same freedom that you would other prejudices. Trace it to the fountain-head, and you shall not find that you had it by any of your senses, the only true means of discovering what is real and substantial in nature: you will find it lying amongst other old lumber in some obscure corner of the imagination, the proper receptacle of visions, fancies, and prejudices of all kinds; and if you are more attached to this than the rest, it is only because it is the oldest. This is all, take my word for it, and not mine only, but that of many more the most ingenious men of the age, who, I can assure you, think as I do on the subject of a deity. Though some of them hold it proper to proceed with more reserve in declaring to the world their opinion in this particular, than in most others. And it must be owned, there are still too many in England who retain a foolish prejudice against the name of atheist. But it lessens every day among the better sort: and when it is quite worn out, our free-thinkers may then (and not till then) be said to have given the finishing stroke to religion; it being evident that so long as the existence of God is believed, religion must subsist in some shape or other. But the root being once plucked up, the scions which shot from it will of course wither and decay. Such are all those whimsical notions of conscience, duty, principle, and the like, which fill a man's head with scruples, awe him with fears, and make him a more thorough slave than the horse he rides. A man had better a thousand things be hunted by bailiffs or messengers than haunted by these spectres, which embarrass and embitter all his pleasures, creating the most real and sore servitude upon earth. But the free-thinker, with a vigorous flight of thought, breaks through those airy springes, and asserts his original independency. Others indeed may talk, and write, and fight about liberty, and make an outward pretence to it; but the free-thinker alone is truly free. Alciphron having ended this discourse with an air of triumph, Euphranor spoke to him in the following manner: You make clear work. The gentlemen of your profession are, it seems, admirable weeders. You have rooted up a world of notions: I should be glad to see what fine things you have planted in their stead. *Alc.* Have patience, good Euphranor. I will show you in the first place, that whatever was sound and good we leave untouched, and encourage it

to grow in the mind of man. And secondly, I will show you what excellent things we have planted in it. You must know then, that pursuing our close and severe scrutiny, we do at last arrive at something solid and real, in which all mankind agree, to wit, the appetites, passions, and senses: these are founded in nature, are real, have real objects, and are attended with real and substantial pleasures; food, drink, sleep, and the like animal enjoyments being what all men like and love. And if we extend our view to other kinds of animals, we shall find them all agree in this, that they have certain natural appetites and senses, in the gratifying and satisfying of which they are constantly employed. Now these real natural good things, which include nothing of notion or fancy, we are so far from destroying, that we do all we can to cherish and improve them. According to us, every wise man looks upon himself, or his own bodily existence in this present world, as the centre and ultimate end of all his actions and regards. He considers his appetites as natural guides directing to his proper good, his passions and senses as the natural, true means of enjoying this good. Hence he endeavours to keep his appetites in high relish, his passions and senses strong and lively, and to provide the greatest quantity and variety of real objects suited to them, which he studieth to enjoy by all possible means, and in the highest perfection imaginable. And the man who can do this without restraint, remorse, or fear, is as happy as any other animal whatsoever, or as his nature is capable of being. Thus I have given you a succinct view of the principles, discoveries, and tenets of the select spirits of this enlightened age.

X. Crito remarked, that Alciphron had spoken his mind with great clearness. Yes, replied Euphranor, we are obliged to the gentleman for letting us at once into the tenets of his sect. But, if I may be allowed to speak my mind, Alciphron, though in compliance with my own request, hath given me no small uneasiness. You need, said Alciphron, make no apology for speaking freely what you think to one who professeth himself a free-thinker. I should be sorry to make one whom I meant to oblige uneasy. Pray let me know wherein I have offended. I am half ashamed, replied Euphranor, to own that I, who am no great genius, have a weakness incidental to little ones. I would say that I have favourite opinions, which you represent to be errors and prejudices. For instance, the immortality of the soul is a notion I am fond of, as what supports the mind with a very pleasing prospect. And if it be an error, I should perhaps be of Tully's mind, who in that case professed he should be sorry to know the truth, acknowledging no sort of obligation to certain philosophers in his days, who taught the soul of man was mortal. They were, it seems, predecessors to those who are now called free-thinkers; which name being too general and indefinite, inasmuch as it com-

prehends all those who think for themselves, whether they agree in opinion with these gentlemen or no, it should not seem amiss to assign them a specific appellation or peculiar name, whereby to distinguish them from other philosophers, at least in our present conference. For I cannot bear to argue against free-thinking and free-thinkers. *Alc.* In the eyes of a wise man words are of small moment. We do not think truth attached to a name. *Euph.* If you please then, to avoid confusion, let us call your sect by the same name that Tully (who understood the force of language) bestowed upon them. *Alc.* With all my heart. Pray what might that name be? *Euph.* Why he calls them minute philosophers. Right, said Crito, the modern free-thinkers are the very same with those Cicero called minute philosophers, which name admirably suits them, they being a sort of sect which diminish all the most valuable things, the thoughts, views, and hopes of men: all the knowledge, notions, and theories of the mind they reduce to sense; human nature they contract and degrade to the narrow, low standard of animal life, and assign us only a small pittance of time instead of immortality. Alciphron very gravely remarked, that the gentlemen of his sect had done no injury to man, and that if he be a little, short-lived, contemptible animal, it was not their saying it made him so: and they were no more to blame for whatever defects they discover, than a faithful glass for making the wrinkles which it only shows. As to what you observe, said he, of those we now call free-thinkers having been anciently termed minute philosophers, it is my opinion this appellation might be derived from their considering things minutely, and not swallowing them in the gross, as other men are used to do. Besides, we all know the best eyes are necessary to discern the minutest objects; it seems therefore, that minute philosophers might have been so called from their distinguished perspicacity. *Euph.* O Alciphron! these minute philosophers (since that is their true name) are a sort of pirates who plunder all that come in their way. I consider myself as a man left stripped and desolate on a bleak beach.

XI. But who are these profound and learned men that of late years have demolished the whole fabric which lawgivers, philosophers, and divines had been erecting for so many ages? Lysicles hearing these words smiled, and said he believed Euphranor had figured to himself philosophers in square caps and long gowns: but, thanks to these happy times, the reign of pedantry was over. Our philosophers, said he, are of a very different kind from those awkward students, who think to come at knowledge by poring on dead languages, and old authors, or by sequestering themselves from the cares of the world to meditate in solitude and retirement. They are the best bred men of the age, men who know the world, men of pleasure, men of fashion, and fine

gentlemen. *Euph.* I have some small notion of the people you mention, but should never have taken them for philosophers. *Cri.* Nor would any one else till of late. The world, it seems, was long under a mistake about the way to knowledge, thinking it lay through a tedious course of academical education and study. But among the discoveries of the present age, one of the principal is the finding out that such a method doth rather retard and obstruct, than promote knowledge. *Alc.* Academical study may be comprised in two points, reading and meditation. Their reading is chiefly employed on ancient authors in dead languages: so that a great part of their time is spent in learning words; which, when they have mastered with infinite pains, what do they get by it but old and obsolete notions, that are now quite exploded and out of use? Then, as to their meditations, what can they possibly be good for? He that wants the proper materials of thought, may think and meditate for ever to no purpose: those cobwebs spun by scholars out of their own brains being alike unserviceable, either for use or ornament. Proper ideas or materials are only to be got by frequenting good company. I know several gentlemen, who, since their appearance in the world, have spent as much time in rubbing off the rust and pedantry of a college education, as they had done before in acquiring it. *Lys.* I'll undertake, a lad of fourteen, bred in the modern way, shall make a better figure, and be more considered in any drawing-room or assembly of polite people, than one of four and twenty, who hath lain by a long time at school and college. He shall say better things, in a better manner, and be more liked by good judges. *Euph.* Where doth he pick up all this improvement? *Cri.* Where our grave ancestors would never have looked for it, in a drawing-room, a coffee-house, a chocolate-house, at the tavern, or groom-porter's. In these and the like fashionable places of resort, it is the custom for polite persons to speak freely on all subjects, religious, moral, or political. So that a young gentleman who frequents them is in the way of hearing many instructive lectures, seasoned with wit and raillery, and uttered with spirit. Three or four sentences from a man of quality spoken with a good air, make more impression, and convey more knowledge, than a dozen dissertations in a dry academical way. *Euph.* There is then no method or course of studies in those places. *Lys.* None but an easy free conversation, which takes in every thing that offers, without any rule or design. *Euph.* I always thought that some order was necessary to attain any useful degree of knowledge; that haste and confusion begat a conceited ignorance; that to make our advances sure, they should be gradual, and those points first learned which might cast a light on what was to follow. *Alc.* So long as learning was to be obtained only by that slow formal course of study, few

of the better sort knew much of it: but now it is grown an amusement, our young gentry and nobility imbibe it insensibly amidst their diversions, and make a considerable progress. *Euph.* Hence probably the great number of minute philosophers. *Cri.* I is to this that sect is owing for so many ingenious proficients of both sexes. You may now commonly see (what no former age ever saw) a young lady or a *petit maître* nonplus a divine or an old-fashioned gentleman, who hath read many a Greek and Latin author, and spent much time in hard methodical study. *Euph.* It should seem then that method, exactness, and industry are a disadvantage. Here Alciphron, turning to Lysicles, said he could make the point very clear, if Euphranor had any notion of painting. *Euph.* I never saw a first-rate picture in my life, but have a tolerable collection of prints, and have seen some good drawings. *Alc.* You know then the difference between the Dutch and the Italian manner. *Euph.* I have some notion of it. *Alc.* Suppose now a drawing finished by the nice and laborious touches of a Dutch pencil, and another off hand scratched out in the free manner of a great Italian master. The Dutch piece, which hath cost so much pains and time, will be exact indeed, but without that force, spirit, or grace, which appear in the other, and are the effects of an easy, free pencil. Do but apply this, and the point will be clear. *Euph.* Pray inform me, did those great Italian masters begin and proceed in their art without any choice of method or subject, and always draw with the same ease and freedom? Or did they observe some method, beginning with simple and elementary parts, an eye, a nose, a finger, which they drew with great pains and care, often drawing the same thing, in order to draw it correctly, and so proceeding with patience and industry, till after a considerable length of time they arrived at the free masterly manner you speak of? If this were the case, I leave you to make the application. *Alc.* You may dispute the matter if you please. But a man of parts is one thing, and a pedant another. Pains and method may do for some sort of people. A man must be a long time kindling wet straw into a vile smothering flame, but spirits blaze out at once. *Euph.* The minute philosophers have, it seems, better parts than other men, which qualifies them for a different education. *Alc.* Tell me, Euphranor, what is it that gives one man a better mien than another; more politeness in dress, speech, and motion? Nothing but frequenting good company. By the same means men get insensibly a delicate taste, a refined judgment, a certain politeness in thinking and expressing one's self. No wonder if you countrymen are strangers to the advantage of polite conversation, which constantly keeps the mind awake and active, exercising its faculties, and calling forth all its strength and spirit on a thousand different occasions and subjects, that never came in the way of a

book-worm in a college, no more than of a ploughman. *Cri.* Hence those lively faculties, that quickness of apprehension, that slyness of ridicule, that egregious talent of wit and humour which distinguish the gentlemen of your profession. *Euph.* It should seem then that your sect is made up of what you call fine gentlemen. *Lys.* Not altogether, for we have among us some contemplative spirits of a coarser education, who, from observing the behaviour and proceedings of apprentices, watermen, porters, and the assemblies of rabble in the streets, have arrived at a profound knowledge of human nature, and made great discoveries about the principles, springs, and motives of moral actions. These have demolished the received systems, and done a world of good in the city. *Alc.* I tell you we have men of all sorts and professions, plodding citizens, thriving stockjobbers, skilful men in business, polite courtiers, gallant men of the army; but our chief strength and flower of the flock are those promising young men who have the advantage of a modern education. These are the growing hopes of our sect, by whose credit and influence in a few years we expect to see those great things accomplished that we have in view. *Euph.* I could never have imagined your sect so considerable. *Alc.* There are in England many honest folk as much in the dark about these matters as yourselves.

XII. To judge of the prevailing opinion among people of fashion, by what a senator saith in the house, a judge upon the bench, or a priest in the pulpit, who all speak according to law, that is, to the reverend prejudices of our forefathers, would be wrong. You should go into good company, and mind what men of parts and breeding say, those who are best heard and most admired, as well in public places of resort as in private visits. He only who hath these opportunities, can know our real strength, our numbers, and the figure that we make. *Euph.* By your account there must be many minute philosophers among the men of rank and fortune. *Alc.* Take my word for it, not a few, and they do much contribute to the spreading our notions. For he who knows the world must observe, that fashions constantly descend. It is therefore the right way to propagate an opinion from the upper end. Not to say, that the patronage of such men is an encouragement to our authors. *Euph.* It seems then you have authors among you. *Lys.* That we have, several, and those very great men, who have obliged the world with many useful and profound discoveries. *Cri.* Moschon, for instance, hath proved that man and beast are really of the same nature: that consequently a man need only indulge his senses and appetites to be as happy as a brute. Gorgias hath gone further, demonstrating man to be a piece of clock-work or machine; and that thought or reason are the same thing as the impulse of

one ball against another. Cimon hath made noble use of these discoveries, proving as clearly as any proposition in mathematics, that conscience is a whim, and morality a prejudice; and that a man is no more accountable for his actions than a clock is for striking. Tryphon hath written irrefragably on the usefulness of vice. Thrasenor hath confuted the foolish prejudice men had against atheism, showing that a republic of atheists might live very happily together. Demylus hath made a jest of loyalty, and convinced the world there is nothing in it: to him and another philosopher of the same stamp, this age is indebted for discovering, that public spirit is an idle enthusiasm which seizeth only on weak minds. It would be endless to recount the discoveries made by writers of this sect. *Lys.* But the masterpiece and finishing stroke is a learned anecdote of our great Diagoras, containing a demonstration against the being of God; which, it is conceived, the public is not yet ripe for. But I am assured by some judicious friends who have seen it, that it is as clear as day-light, and will do a world of good, at one blow demolishing the whole system of religion. These discoveries are published by our philosophers, sometimes in just volumes, but often in pamphlets and loose papers, for their readier conveyance through the kingdom. And to them must be ascribed that absolute and independent freedom, which groweth so fast to the terror of all bigots. Even the dull and ignorant begin to open their eyes, and be influenced by the example and authority of so many ingenious men. *Euph.* It should seem by this account, that your sect extend their discoveries beyond religion; and that loyalty to his prince, or reverence for the laws, are but mean things in the eye of a minute philosopher. *Lys.* Very mean: we are too wise to think there is any thing sacred either in king or constitution, or indeed in any thing else. A man of sense may perhaps seem to pay an occasional regard to his prince; but this is no more at bottom than what he pays to God, when he kneels at the sacrament to qualify himself for an office. Fear God, and honour the king, are a pair of slavish maxims, which had for a long time cramped human nature, and awed, not only weak minds, but even men of good understanding, till their eyes, as I observed before, were opened by our philosophers. *Euph.* Methinks I can easily comprehend that, when the fear of God is quite extinguished, the mind must be very easy with respect to other duties, which become outward pretences and formalities, from the moment that they quit their hold upon the conscience, and conscience always supposeth the being of a God. But I still thought that Englishmen of all denominations (how widely soever they differ as to some particular points) agreed in the belief of a God, and of so much at least as is called natural religion. *Alc.* I have already told you my own opinion of those

matters, and what I know to be the opinion of many more. *Cri.* Probably, Euphranor, by the title of *deists*, which is sometimes given to minute philosophers, you have been misled to imagine they believe and worship a God according to the light of nature: but by living among them, you may soon be convinced of the contrary. They have neither time, nor place, nor form of divine worship; they offer neither prayers nor praises to God in public; and in their private practice show a contempt or dislike even of the duties of natural religion. For instance, the saying grace before and after meals is a plain point of natural worship, and was once universally practised; but in proportion as this sect prevailed it hath been laid aside, not only by the minute philosophers themselves, who would be infinitely ashamed of such a weakness as to beg God's blessing, or give God thanks for their daily food; but also by others who are afraid of being thought fools by the minute philosophers. *Euph.* Is it possible that men, who really believe a God, should yet decline paying so easy and reasonable a duty for fear of incurring the contempt of atheists? *Cri.* I tell you there are many, who believing in their hearts the truth of religion, are yet afraid or ashamed to own it, lest they should forfeit their reputation with those who have the good luck to pass for great wits and men of genius. *Alc.* O Euphranor, we must make allowance for Crito's prejudice: he is a worthy gentleman, and means well. But doth it not look like prejudice to ascribe the respect that is paid our ingenious free-thinkers rather to good luck than to merit? *Euph.* I acknowledge their merit to be very wonderful, and that those authors must needs be great men who are able to prove such paradoxes: for example, that so knowing a man as a minute philosopher should be a mere machine, or at best no better than a brute. *Alc.* It is a true maxim, that a man should think with the learned and speak with the vulgar. I should be loath to place a gentleman of merit in such a light, before prejudiced and ignorant men. The tenets of our philosophy have this in common with many other truths, in metaphysics, geometry, astronomy, and natural philosophy, that vulgar ears cannot bear them. All our discoveries and notions are in themselves true and certain; but they are at present known only to the better sort, and would sound strange and odd among the vulgar. But this, it is to be hoped, will wear off with time. *Euph.* I do not wonder that vulgar minds should be startled at the notions of your philosophy. *Cri.* Truly a very curious sort of philosophy, and much to be admired.

XIII. The profound thinkers of this way have taken a direct contrary course to all the great philosophers of former ages, who made it their endeavour to raise and refine human kind, and remove it as far as possible from the brute; to moderate and

subdue men's appetites; to remind them of the dignity of their nature; to awaken and improve their superior faculties and direct them to the noblest objects; to possess men's minds with a high sense of the Divinity, of the supreme good, and the immortality of the soul. They took great pains to strengthen the obligations to virtue, and upon all those subjects have wrought out noble theories, and treated with singular force of reason. But it seems our minute philosophers act the reverse of all other wise and thinking men; it being their end and aim to erase the principles of all that is great and good from the mind of man, to unhinge all order of civil life, to undermine the foundations of morality, and, instead of improving and ennobling our natures, to bring us down to the maxims and way of thinking of the most uneducated and barbarous nations, and even to degrade human kind to a level with brute beasts. And all the while they would pass upon the world for men of deep knowledge. But in effect what is all this negative knowledge better than downright savage ignorance? That there is no Providence, no spirit, no future state, no moral duty: truly a fine system for an honest man to own, or an ingenious man to value himself upon! Alciphron, who heard this discourse with some uneasiness, very gravely replied: Disputes are not to be decided by the weight of authority, but by the force of reason. You may pass, indeed, general reflections on our notions, and call them brutal and barbarous if you please: but it is such brutality and such barbarism as few could have attained to if men of the greatest genius had not broken the ice, there being nothing more difficult than to get the better of education, and conquer old prejudices. To remove and cast off a heap of rubbish that has been gathering upon the soul from our very infancy, requires great courage and great strength of faculties. Our philosophers, therefore, do well deserve the name of *esprits forts*, men of strong heads, free-thinkers, and such like appellations betokening great force and liberty of mind. It is very possible, the heroic labours of these men may be represented (for what is not capable of misrepresentation?) as a piratical plundering and stripping the mind of its wealth and ornaments, when it is in truth the divesting it only of its prejudices, and reducing it to its untainted original state of nature. Oh nature! the genuine beauty of pure nature! *Euph.* You seem very much taken with the beauty of nature. Be pleased to tell me, Alciphron, what those things are which you esteem natural, or by what mark I may know them.

XIV. *Alc.* For a thing to be natural, for instance to the mind of man, it must appear originally therein, it must be universally in all men, it must be invariably the same in all nations and ages. These limitations of original, universal, and invariable, exclude all those notions found in the human mind, which are the

effect of custom and education. The case is the same with respect to all other species of beings. A cat, for example, hath a natural inclination to pursue a mouse, because it agrees with the forementioned marks. But if a cat be taught to play tricks, you will not say those tricks are natural. For the same reason, if upon a plum-tree peaches and apricots are engrafted, nobody will say they are the natural growth of the plum-tree. *Euph.* But to return to *man:* it seems you allow those things alone to be natural to him, which show themselves upon his first entrance into the world; to wit the senses and such passions and appetites as are discovered upon the first application of their respective objects. *Alc.* That is my opinion. *Euph.* Tell me, Alciphron, if from a young apple-tree after a certain period of time there should shoot forth leaves, blossoms, and apples; would you deny these things to be natural, because they did not discover and display themselves in the tender bud? *Alc.* I would not. *Euph.* And suppose that in a man, after a certain season, the appetite of lust or the faculty of reason shall shoot forth, open, and display themselves as leaves and blossoms do in a tree; would you therefore deny them to be natural to him, because they did not appear in his original infancy? *Alc.* I acknowledge I would not. *Euph.* It seems therefore, that the first mark of a thing's being natural to the mind was not warily laid down by you; to wit, that it should appear originally in it. *Alc.* It seems so. *Euph.* Again, inform me, Alciphron, whether you do not think it natural for an orange-plant to produce oranges? *Alc.* I do. *Euph.* But plant it in the north end of Great Britain, and it shall with care produce, perhaps, a good sallad; in the southern parts of the same island, it may with much pains and culture thrive and produce indifferent fruit; but in Portugal or Naples it will produce much better with little or no pains. Is this true or not? *Alc.* It is true. *Euph.* The plant being the same in all places doth not produce the same fruit, sun, soil, and cultivation making a difference. *Alc.* I grant it. *Euph.* And since the case is, you say, the same with respect to all species, why may we not conclude by a parity of reason that things may be natural to human kind, and yet neither found in all men, nor invariably the same where they are found? *Alc.* Hold, Euphranor, you must explain yourself further. I shall not be over hasty in my concessions. *Lys.* You are in the right, Alciphron, to stand upon your guard. I do not like these ensnaring questions. *Euph.* I desire you to make no concessions in complaisance to me, but only to tell me your opinion upon each particular, that we may understand one another, know wherein we agree, and proceed jointly in finding out the truth. But (added Euphranor, turning to Crito and me) if the gentlemen are against a free and fair inquiry, I shall give them no further

trouble. *Alc.* Our opinions will stand the test. We fear no trial: proceed as you please. *Euph.* It seems then that from what you have granted it should follow, things may be natural to men, although they do not actually show themselves in all men, nor in equal perfection; there being as great difference of culture and every other advantage with respect to human nature, as is to be found with respect to the vegetable nature of plants, to use your own similitude: is it so or not? *Alc.* It is. *Euph.* Answer me, Alciphron, do not men in all times and places, when they arrive at a certain age, express their thoughts by speech? *Alc.* They do. *Euph.* Should it not seem then that language is natural? *Alc.* It should. *Euph.* And yet there is a great variety of languages. *Alc.* I acknowledge there is. *Euph.* From all this will it not follow, a thing may be natural and yet admit of variety? *Alc.* I grant it will. *Euph.* Should it not seem therefore to follow, that a thing may be natural to mankind, though it have not those marks or conditions assigned; though it be not original, universal, and invariable? *Alc.* It should. *Euph.* And that consequently religious worship and civil government may be natural to man, notwithstanding they admit of sundry forms and different degrees of perfection? *Alc.* It seems so. *Euph.* You have granted already that reason is natural to mankind. *Alc.* I have. *Euph.* Whatever therefore is agreeable to reason is agreeable to the nature of man. *Alc.* It is. *Euph.* Will it not follow from hence that truth and virtue are natural to man? *Alc.* Whatever is reasonable I admit to be natural. *Euph.* And as those fruits which grow from the most generous and mature stock, in the choicest soil, and with the best culture, are most esteemed; even so ought we not to think, those sublime truths which are the fruits of mature thought, and have been rationally deduced by men of the best and most improved understandings, to be the choicest productions of the rational nature of man? And if so, being in fact reasonable, natural, and true, they ought not to be esteemed unnatural whims, errors of education, and groundless prejudices, because they are raised and forwarded by manuring and cultivating our tender minds, because they take early root and sprout forth betimes by the care and diligence of our instructors. *Alc.* Agreed, provided still they may be rationally deduced: but to take this for granted of what men vulgarly call the truths of morality and religion, would be begging the question. *Euph.* You are in the right: I do not, therefore, take for granted that they are rationally deduced. I only suppose that, if they are, they must be allowed natural to man, or in other words agreeable to, and growing from, the most excellent and peculiar part of human nature. *Alc.* I have nothing to object to this. *Euph.* What shall we think then of your former assertions; that nothing is natural to man but what may be found in

all men, in all nations and ages of the world; that to obtain a genuine view of human nature, we must extirpate all the effects of education and instruction, and regard only the senses, appetites, and passions which are to be found originally in all mankind; that, therefore, the notion of a God can have no foundation in nature, as not being originally in the mind, nor the same in all men? Be pleased to reconcile these things with your late concessions, which the force of truth seems to have extorted from you.

XV. *Alc.* Tell me, Euphranor, whether truth be not one and the same uniform, invariable thing: and, if so, whether the many different and inconsistent notions which men entertain of God and duty be not a plain proof there is no truth in them? *Euph.* That truth is constant and uniform I freely own, and that consequently opinions repugnant to each other cannot be true: but I think it will not hence follow they are all alike false. If among various opinions about the same thing, one be grounded on clear and evident reasons, that is to be thought true, and others only so far as they consist with it. Reason is the same, and rightly applied will lead to the same conclusions in all times and places. Socrates two thousand years ago seems to have reasoned himself into the same notion of a God, which is entertained by the philosophers of our days, if you will allow that name to any who are not atheists. And the remark of Confucius, that a man should guard in his youth against lust, in manhood against faction, and in old age against covetousness, is as current morality in Europe as in China. *Alc.* But still it would be a satisfaction if all men thought the same way, difference of opinions implying uncertainty. *Euph.* Tell me, Alciphron, what you take to be the cause of a lunar eclipse. *Alc.* The shadow of the earth interposing between the sun and moon. *Euph.* Are you assured of this? *Alc.* Undoubtedly. *Euph.* Are all mankind agreed in this truth? *Alc.* By no means. Ignorant and barbarous people assign different ridiculous causes of this appearance. *Euph.* It seems then there are different opinions about the nature of an eclipse. *Alc.* There are. *Euph.* And nevertheless one of these opinions is true. *Alc.* It is. *Euph.* Diversity therefore of opinions about a thing doth not hinder but that the thing may be, and one of the opinions concerning it may be true. *Alc.* I acknowledge it. *Euph.* It should seem, therefore, that your argument against the belief of a God from the variety of opinions about his nature is not conclusive. Nor do I see how you can conclude against the truth of any moral or religious tenet, from the various opinions of men upon the same subject. Might not a man as well argue, that no historical account of a matter of fact can be true, when different relations are given of it? Or may we not as well infer, that because the

several sects of philosophy maintain different opinions, none of them can be in the right, not even the minute philosophers themselves? During this conversation Lysicles seemed uneasy, like one that wished in his heart there was no God. Alciphron, said he, methinks you sit by very tamely, while Euphranor saps the foundation of your tenets. Be of good courage, replied Alciphron: a skilful gamester has been known to ruin his adversary by yielding him some advantage at first. I am glad, said he, turning to Euphranor, that you are drawn in to argue and make your appeals to reason. For my part, wherever reason leads I shall not be afraid to follow. Know then, Euphranor, that I freely give up what you now contend for. I do not value the success of a few crude notions thrown out in a loose discourse, any more than the Turks do the loss of that vile infantry they place in the front of their armies, for no other end but to waste the powder and blunt the swords of their enemies. Be assured I have in reserve a body of other-guess arguments, which I am ready to produce. I will undertake to prove—— *Euph.* O Alciphron! I do not doubt your faculty of proving. But before I put you to the trouble of any further proofs, I should be glad to know whether the notions of your minute philosophy are worth proving. I mean, whether they are of use and service to mankind?

XVI. *Alc.* As to that, give me leave to tell you, a thing may be useful to one man's views, and not to another's: but truth is truth, whether useful or not, and must not be measured by the convenience of this or that man, or party of men. *Euph.* But is not the general good of mankind to be regarded as a rule and measure of moral truths, of all such truths as direct or influence the moral actions of men? *Alc.* That point is not clear to me. I know, indeed, that legislators, and divines, and politicians have always alleged, that it is necessary to the well-being of mankind, that they should be kept in awe by the slavish notions of religion and morality. But granting all this, how will it prove these notions to be true? Convenience is one thing, and truth is another. A genuine philosopher, therefore, will overlook all advantages and consider only truth itself, as such. *Eph.* Tell me, Alciphron, is your genuine philosopher a wise man, or a fool? *Alc.* Without question, the wisest of men. *Euph.* Which is to be thought the wise man, he who acts with design, or he who acts at random? *Alc.* He who acts with design. *Euph.* Whoever acts with design, acts for some end: doth he not? *Alc.* He doth. *Euph.* And a wise man for a good end? *Alc.* True. *Euph.* And he showeth his wisdom in making choice of fit means to obtain his end. *Alc.* I acknowledge it. *Euph.* By how much therefore the end proposed is more excellent, and by how much fitter the means employed are to obtain it, so much the wiser is

the agent to be esteemed. *Alc.* This seems to be true. *Euph.* Can a rational agent propose a more excellent end than happiness? *Alc.* He cannot. *Euph.* Of good things, the greater good is most excellent. *Alc.* Doubtless. *Euph.* Is not the general happiness of mankind a greater good than the private happiness of one man, or of some certain men? *Alc.* It is. *Euph.* Is it not therefore the most excellent end? *Alc.* It seems so. *Euph.* Are not then those who pursue this end by the properest methods to be thought the wisest men? *Alc.* I grant they are. *Euph.* Which is a wise man governed by, wise or foolish notions? *Alc.* By wise, doubtless. *Euph.* It seems then to follow, that he who promotes the general well-being of mankind by the proper necessary means, is truly wise, and acts upon wise grounds. *Alc.* It should seem so. *Euph.* And is not folly of an opposite nature to wisdom? *Alc.* It is. *Euph.* Might it not therefore be inferred, that those men are foolish who go about to unhinge such principles as have a necessary connexion with the general good of mankind? *Alc.* Perhaps this might be granted: but at the same time I must observe, that it is in my power to deny it. *Euph.* How! you will not surely deny the conclusion, when you admit the premises. *Alc.* I would fain know upon what terms we argue; whether in this progress of question and answer, if a man makes a slip, it be utterly irretrievable. For if you are on the catch to lay hold of every advantage, without allowing for surprise or inattention, I must tell you this is not the way to convince my judgment. *Euph.* O Alciphron! I aim not at triumph, but at truth. You are therefore at full liberty to unravel all that hath been said, and to recover or correct any slip you have made. But then you must distinctly point it out: otherwise it will be impossible ever to arrive at any conclusion. *Alc.* I agree with you upon these terms jointly to proceed in search of truth, for to that I am sincerely devoted. In the progress of our present inquiry I was, it seems, guilty of an oversight, in acknowledging the general happiness of mankind to be a greater good than the particular happiness of one man. For in fact, the individual happiness of every man alone, constitutes his own entire good. The happiness of other men making no part of mine, is not with respect to me a good: I mean a true natural good. It cannot therefore be a reasonable end to be proposed by me in truth and nature (for I do not speak of political pretences), since no wise man will pursue an end which doth not concern him. This is the voice of nature. O nature! thou art the fountain, original, and pattern of all that is good and wise. *Euph.* You would like then to follow nature, and propose her as a guide and pattern for your imitation. *Alc.* Of all things. *Euph.* Whence do you gather this respect for nature? *Alc.* From the excellency of her pro-

ductions. *Euph.* In a vegetable, for instance, you say there is use and excellency, because the several parts of it are so connected and fitted to each other, as to protect and nourish the whole, make the individual grow, and propagate the kind, and because in its fruits or qualities it is adapted to please the sense, or contribute to the benefit of man. *Alc.* Even so. *Euph.* In like manner, do you not infer the excellency of animal bodies from observing the frame and fitness of their several parts, by which they mutually conspire to the well-being of each other as well as of the whole? Do you not also observe a natural union and consent between animals of the same kind, and that even different kinds of animals have certain qualities and instincts whereby they contribute to the exercise, nourishment, and delight of each other? Even the inanimate, unorganized elements seem to have an excellence relative to each other. Where was the excellency of water, if it did not cause herbs and vegetables to spring from the earth, and put forth flowers and fruits? And what would become of the beauty of the earth, if it was not warmed by the sun, moistened by water, and fanned by air? Throughout the whole system of the visible and natural world, do you not perceive a mutual connexion and correspondence of parts? And is it not from hence that you frame an idea of the perfection, and order, and beauty of nature? *Alc.* All this I grant. *Euph.* And have not the Stoics heretofore said (who were no more bigots than you are), and did you not yourself say, this pattern of order was worthy the imitation of rational agents? *Alc.* I do not deny this to be true. *Euph.* Ought we not therefore to infer the same union, order, and regularity in the moral world that we perceive to be in the natural? *Alc.* We ought. *Euph.* Should it not therefore seem to follow that reasonable creatures were, as the philosophical emperor* observes, made one for another: and consequently that man ought not to consider himself as an independent individual, whose happiness is not connected with that of other men; but rather as the part of a whole, to the common good of which he ought to conspire, and order his ways and actions suitably, if he would live according to nature? *Alc.* Supposing this to be true, what then? *Euph.* Will it not follow that a wise man should consider and pursue his private good, with regard to, and in conjunction with, that of other men? in granting of which, you thought yourself guilty of an oversight. Though, indeed, the sympathy of pain and pleasure, and the mutual affections by which mankind are knit together, have been always allowed a plain proof of this point: and though it was the constant doctrine of those, who were esteemed the wisest and most thinking men among the ancients, as the Platonists, Peripatetics, and Stoics; to say nothing of

* M. Antonin. l. 4.

Christians, whom you pronounce to be an unthinking, prejudiced sort of people. *Alc.* I shall not dispute this point with you. *Euph.* Since therefore we are so far agreed, should it not seem to follow from the premises, that the belief of a God, of a future state, and of moral duties, are the only wise, right, and genuine principles of human conduct, in case they have a necessary connexion with the well-being of mankind? This conclusion you have been led to by your own concessions and by the analogy of nature. *Alc.* I have been drawn into it step by step through several preliminaries, which I cannot well call to mind: but one thing I observe, that you build on the necessary connexion those principles have with the well-being of mankind, which is a point neither proved nor granted. *Lys.* This I take to be a grand fundamental prejudice, as I doubt not, if I had time, I could make appear. But it is now late, and we will, if you think fit, defer this subject till to-morrow. Upon which motion of Lysicles, we put an end to our conversation for that evening.

THE SECOND DIALOGUE.

I. Vulgar error, that vice is hurtful. II. The benefit of drunkenness, gaming, and whoring. III. Prejudice against vice wearing off. IV. Its usefulness illustrated in the instances of Callicles and Telesilla. V. The reasoning of Lysicles in behalf of vice, examined. VI. Wrong to punish actions, when the doctrines whence they flow are tolerated. VII. Hazardous experiment of the minute philosophers. VIII. Their doctrine of circulation and revolution. IX. Their sense of a reformation. X. Riches alone not the public weal. XI. Authority of minute philosophers: their prejudice against religion. XII. Effects of luxury: virtue, whether notional. XIII. Pleasure of sense. XIV. What sort of pleasure most natural to man. XV. Dignity of human nature. XVI. Pleasure mistaken. XVII. Amusements, misery, and cowardice of minute philosophers. XVIII. Rakes cannot reckon. XIX. Abilities and success of minute philosophers. XX. Happy effects of the minute philosophy in particular instances. XXI. Their free notions about government. XXII. England the proper soil for minute philosophy. XXIII. The policy and address of its professors. XXIV. Merit of minute philosophers towards the public. XXV. Their notions and character. XXVI. Their tendency towards popery and slavery.

I. Next morning, Alciphron and Lysicles said the weather was so fine they had a mind to spend the day abroad, and take a cold dinner under a shade in some pleasant part of the country. Whereupon, after breakfast, we went down to a beach about half a mile off; where we walked on the smooth sand, with the ocean on one hand, and on the other wild broken rocks, intermixed with shady trees and springs of water, till the sun began to be uneasy. We then withdrew into a hollow glade, between two rocks, where we had no sooner seated ourselves but Lysicles addressing himself to Euphranor, said: I am now ready to perform what I undertook last evening, which was to show, there is nothing in

that necessary connexion which some men imagine between those principles you contend for, and the public good. I freely own, that if this question was to be decided by the authority of legislators or philosophers, it must go against us. For those men generally take it for granted, that vice is pernicious to the public; and that men cannot be kept from vice but by the fear of God, and the sense of a future state; whence they are induced to think the belief of such things necessary to the well-being of human kind. This false notion hath prevailed for many ages in the world, and done an infinite deal of mischief, being in truth the cause of religious establishments, and gaining the protection and encouragement of laws and magistrates to the clergy and their superstitions. Even some of the wisest among the ancients, who agreed with our sect in denying a providence and the immortality of the soul, had nevertheless the weakness to lie under the common prejudice that vice was hurtful to societies of men. But England hath of late produced great philosophers who have undeceived the world, and proved to a demonstration that private vices are public benefits. This discovery was reserved to our times, and our sect hath the glory of it. *Cri.* It is possible some men of fine understanding might in former ages have had a glimpse of this important truth; but it may be presumed they lived in ignorant times and bigoted countries, which were not ripe for such a discovery. *Lys.* Men of narrow capacities and short sight, being able to see no further than one link in a chain of consequences, are shocked at small evils which attend upon vice. But those who can enlarge their view, and look through a long series of events, may behold happiness resulting from vice, and good springing out of evil in a thousand instances. To prove my point I shall not trouble you with authorities or far-fetched arguments, but bring you to plain matter of fact. Do but take a view of each particular vice, and trace it through its effects and consequences, and then you will clearly perceive the advantage it brings to the public.

II. Drunkenness, for instance, is by your sober moralists thought a pernicious vice; but it is for want of considering the good effects that flow from it. For in the first place, it increases the malt-tax, a principal branch of his majesty's revenue, and thereby promotes the safety, strength, and glory of the nation. Secondly, it employs a great number of hands, the brewer, the maltster, the ploughman, the dealer in hops, the smith, the carpenter, the brazier, the joiner, with all other artificers necessary to supply those enumerated with their respective instruments and utensils. All which advantages are procured from drunkenness in the vulgar way, by strong beer. This point is so clear it will admit of no dispute. But while you are forced to allow thus much, I foresee you are ready to object against drunkenness

occasioned by wine and spirits, as exporting wealth into foreign countries. But you do not reflect upon the number of hands which even this sets on work at home: the distillers, the vintners, the merchants, the sailors, the shipwrights, with all those who are employed towards victualling and fitting out ships, which upon a nice computation will be found to include an incredible variety of trades and callings. Then for freighting our ships to answer these foreign importations, all our manufacturers throughout the kingdom are employed, the spinners, the weavers, the dyers, the wool-combers, the carriers, the packers. And the same may be said of many other manufactures, as well as the woollen. And if it be further considered, how many men are enriched by all the forementioned ways of trade and business, and the expenses of these men and their families, in all the several articles of convenient and fashionable living, whereby all sorts of trades and callings, not only at home, but throughout all parts wherever our commerce reaches, are kept in employment; you will be amazed at the wonderfully extended scene of benefits which arise from the single vice of drunkenness, so much run down and declaimed against by all grave reformers. With as much judgment your half-witted folk are accustomed to censure gaming. And indeed (such is the ignorance and folly of mankind) a gamester and a drunkard are thought no better than public nuisances, when in truth they do each in their way greatly conduce to the public benefit. If you look only on the surface and first appearance of things, you will no doubt think playing at cards a very idle and fruitless occupation. But dive deeper, and you shall perceive this idle amusement employs the card-maker, and he sets the paper-mills at work, by which the poor rag-man is supported; not to mention the builders and workers in wood and iron that are employed in erecting and furnishing those mills. Look still deeper, and you shall find that candles and chair-hire employ the industrious and the poor, who by these means come to be relieved by sharpers and gentlemen, who would not give one penny in charity. But you will say that many gentlemen and ladies are ruined by play, without considering that what one man loses another gets, and that consequently as many are made as ruined: money changeth hands, and in this circulation the life of business and commerce consists. When money is spent, it is all one to the public who spends it. Suppose a fool of quality becomes the dupe of a man of mean birth and circumstances, who has more wit: in this case what harm doth the public sustain? Poverty is relieved, ingenuity is rewarded, the money stays at home, and has a lively circulation, the ingenious sharper being enabled to set up an equipage and spend handsomely, which cannot be done without employing a world of people. But you will perhaps object, that a man re-

duced by play may be put upon desperate courses, hurtful to the public. Suppose the worst, and that he turns highwayman; such men have a short life and a merry. While he lives, he spends, and for one that he robs makes twenty the better for his expense. And when his time is come, a poor family may be relieved by fifty or a hundred pounds set upon his head. A vulgar eye looks on many a man as an idle or mischievous fellow, whom a true philosopher, viewing in another light, considers as a man of pleasant occupation who diverts himself, and benefits the public; and that with so much ease, that he employs a multitude of men, and sets an infinite machine in motion, without knowing the good he does, or even intending to do any: which is peculiar to the gentleman-like way of doing good by vice. I was considering play, and that insensibly led me to the advantages which attend robbing on the high-way. Oh the beautiful and never enough admired connexion of vices! It would take too much time to show how they all hang together, and what an infinite deal of good takes its rise from every one of them. One word for a favourite vice, and I shall leave you to make out the rest yourself, by applying the same way of reasoning to all other vices. A poor girl, who might not have the spending of half a crown a week in what you call an honest way, no sooner hath the good fortune to be a kept mistress, but she employs milliners, laundresses, tire-women, mercers, and a number of other trades, to the benefit of her country. It would be endless to trace and pursue every particular vice through its consequences and effects, and show the vast advantage they all are of to the public. The true springs that actuate the great machine of commerce, and make a flourishing state, have been hitherto little understood. Your moralists and divines have for so many ages been corrupting the genuine sense of mankind, and filling their heads with such absurd principles, that it is in the power of few men to contemplate real life with an unprejudiced eye. And fewer still have sufficient parts and sagacity to pursue a long train of consequences, relations, and dependencies, which must be done in order to form a just and entire notion of the public weal. But, as I said before, our sect hath produced men capable of these discoveries, who have displayed them in full light, and made them public for the benefit of their country.

III. Oh! said Euphranor, who heard this discourse with great attention, you, Lysicles, are the very man I wanted, eloquent and ingenious, knowing in the principles of your sect, and willing to impart them. Pray tell me, do these principles find an easy admission in the world? *Lys.* They do among ingenious men and people of fashion, though you will sometimes meet with strong prejudices against them in the middle sort, an effect of ordinary talents and mean breeding. *Euph.* I should wonder if

men were not shocked at notions of such a surprising nature, so contrary to all laws, education, and religion. *Lys.* They would be shocked much more if it had not been for the skilful address of our philosophers, who, considering that most men are influenced by names rather than things, have introduced a certain polite way of speaking, which lessens much of the abhorrence and prejudice towards vice. *Euph.* Explain me this. *Lys.* Thus in our dialect a vicious man is a man of pleasure, a sharper is one that plays the whole game, a lady is said to have an affair, a gentleman to be a gallant, a rogue in business to be one that knows the world. By this means we have no such things as sots, debauchees, whores, rogues, or the like in the *beau monde*, who may enjoy their vices without incurring disagreeable appellations. *Euph.* Vice then is, it seems, a fine thing with an ugly name. *Lys.* Be assured it is. *Euph.* It should seem then, that Plato's fearing lest youth might be corrupted by those fables which represented the gods vicious, was an effect of his weakness and ignorance. *Lys.* It was, take my word for it. *Euph.* And yet Plato had kept good company and lived in a court. And Cicero, who knew the world well, had a profound esteem for him. *Cri.* I tell you, Euphranor, that Plato and Tully might perhaps make a figure in Athens or Rome: but were they to revive in our days, they would pass but for underbred pedants, there being at most coffee-houses in London, several able men who could convince them they knew nothing in—what they are valued so much for—morals and politics. *Lys.* How many long-headed men do I know both in the court-end and the city with five times Plato's sense, who care not one straw what notions their sons have of God or virtue.

IV. *Cri.* I can illustrate this doctrine of Lysicles by examples that will make you perceive its force. Cleophon, a minute philosopher, took strict care of his son's education, and entered him betimes in the principles of his sect. Callicles (that was his son's name) being a youth of parts, made a notable progress: insomuch that before he became of age he killed his old covetous father with vexation, and ruined the estate he left behind him; or, in other words, made a present of it to the public, spreading the dunghill collected by his ancestors over the face of the nation, and making out of one overgrown estate several pretty fortunes for ingenious men, who live by the vices of the great. Telesilla, though a woman of quality and spirit, made no figure in the world, till she was instructed by her husband in the tenets of minute philosophy, which she wisely thought would prevent her giving any thing in charity. From that time she took a turn towards expensive diversions, particularly deep play, by which means she soon transferred a considerable share of his fortune to several acute men skilled in that mystery, who wanted it more,

and circulate it quicker than her husband would have done, who in return hath got an heir to his estate, having never had a child before. That same Telesilla, who was good for nothing as long as she believed her catechism, now shines in all public places, is a lady of gallantry and fashion, and has by her extravagant parade in lace and fine clothes raised a spirit of expense in other ladies, very much to the public benefit, though it must be owned to the mortification of many frugal husbands. While Crito related these facts with a grave face, I could not forbear smiling, which Lysicles observing—Superficial minds, said he, may perhaps find something to ridicule in these accounts; but all who are masters of a just way of thinking must needs see that those maxims, the benefit whereof is universal, and the damage only particular to private persons or families, ought to be encouraged in a wise commonwealth. For my part, said Euphranor, I confess myself to be rather dazzled and confounded than convinced by your reasoning; which, as you observed yourself, taking in the connexion of many distant points, requires great extent of thought to comprehend it. I must therefore entreat you to bear with my defects, suffer me to take to pieces what is too big to be received at once; and where I cannot keep pace with you, permit me to follow you step by step, as fast as I can. *Lys.* There is reason in what you say. Every one cannot suddenly take a long concatenation of arguments.

Euph. Your several arguments seem to centre in this, that vice circulates money and promotes industry, which causeth a people to flourish: is it not so? *Lys.* It is. *Euph.* And the reason that vice produceth this effect is, because it causeth an extravagant consumption which is the most beneficial to the manufacturers, their encouragement consisting in a quick demand and high price. *Lys.* True. *Euph.* Hence you think a drunkard most beneficial to the brewer and the vintner, as causing a quick consumption of liquor, inasmuch as he drinks more than other men. *Lys.* Without doubt. *Euph.* Say, Lysicles, who drinks most, a sick man or a healthy? *Lys.* A healthy. *Euph.* And which is healthiest, a sober man or a drunkard? *Lys.* A sober man. *Euph.* A sober man therefore in health may drink more than a drunkard when he is sick. *Lys.* He may. *Euph.* What think you, will a man consume more meat and drink in a long life or a short one? *Lys.* In a long. *Euph.* A sober, healthy man, therefore, in a long life may circulate more money by eating and drinking, than a glutton or drunkard in a short one. *Lys.* What then? *Euph.* Why then it should seem, that he may be more beneficial to the public even in this way of eating and drinking. *Lys.* I shall never own that temperance is the way to promote drinking. *Euph.* But you will own that sickness lessens, and death puts an end to all drinking. The

same argument will hold, for aught I can see, with respect to all other vices that impair men's health and shorten their lives. And if we admit this, it will not be so clear a point that vice hath merit towards the public. *Lys.* But admitting that some artificers or traders might be as well encouraged by the sober men as the vicious; what shall we say of those who subsist altogether by vice and vanity? *Euph.* If such there are, may they not be otherwise employed without loss to the public? Tell me, Lysicles, is there any thing in the nature of vice, as such, that renders it a public blessing, or is it only the consumption it occasions? *Lys.* I have already shown how it benefits the nation by the consumption of its manufactures. *Euph.* And you have granted that a long and healthy life consumes more than a short and sickly one; and you will not deny that many consume more than one. Upon the whole then compute and say, which is most likely to promote the industry of his countrymen, a virtuous married man with a healthy, numerous offspring, and who feeds and clothes the orphans in his neighbourhood, or a fashionable rake about town. I would fain know whether money spent innocently, doth not circulate as well as that spent upon vice. And if so, whether by your own rule it doth not benefit the public as much? *Lys.* What I have proved I proved plainly, and there is no need of more words about it. *Euph.* You seem to me to have proved nothing, unless you can make it out that it is impossible to spend a fortune innocently. I should think the public weal of a nation consists in the number and good condition of its inhabitants; have you any thing to object to this? *Lys.* I think not. *Euph.* To this end which would most conduce, the employing men in open air and manly exercise, or in sedentary business within doors? *Lys.* The former I suppose. *Euph.* Should it not seem therefore, that building, gardening, and agriculture would employ men more usefully to the public, than if tailors, barbers, perfumers, distillers, and such arts were multiplied. *Lys.* All this I grant; but it makes against you. For what moves men to build and plant but vanity, and what is vanity but vice? *Euph.* But if a man should do those things for his convenience or pleasure, and in proportion to his fortune, without a foolish ostentation or over-rating them beyond their due value, they would not then be the effect of vice; and how do you know but this may be the case? *Cri.* One thing I know, that the readiest way to quicken that sort of industry, and employ carpenters, masons, smiths, and all such trades, would be to put in practice the happy hint of a celebrated minute philosopher, who by profound thinking has discovered that burning the city of London would be no such bad action, as silly prejudiced people might possibly imagine: inasmuch as it would produce a quick circulation of property, transferring it from the rich to the poor, and employing a great number of

artificers of all kinds. This at least cannot be denied, that it hath opened a new way of thinking to our incendiaries, of which the public hath of late begun to reap the benefit. *Euph.* I cannot sufficiently admire this ingenious thought.

VI. But methinks it would be dangerous to make it public. *Cri.* Dangerous to whom? *Euph.* In the first place to the publisher. *Cri.* That is a mistake; for the notion hath been published, and met with due applause in this most wise and happy age of free-thinking, free speaking, free writing, and free acting. *Euph.* How! may a man then publish and practise such things with impunity? *Cri.* To speak the truth, I am not so clear as to the practic part. An unlucky accident now and then befalls an ingenious man. The minute philosopher Magirus, being desirous to benefit the public, by circulating an estate possessed by a near relation who had not the heart to spend it, soon convinced himself, upon these principles, that it would be a very worthy action to despatch out of the way such a useless fellow, to whom he was next heir. But for this laudable attempt, he had the misfortune to be hanged by an underbred judge and jury. Could any thing be more unjust? *Euph.* Why unjust? *Cri.* Is it not unjust to punish actions, when the principles from which they directly follow are tolerated and applauded by the public? Can any thing be more inconsistent than to condemn in practice what is approved in speculation? Truth is one and the same, it being impossible a thing should be practically wrong and speculatively right. Thus much is certain, Magirus was perfect master of all this theory, and argued most acutely about it with a friend of mine, a little before he did the fact for which he died. *Lys.* The best of it is, the world every day grows wiser. *Cri.* You mistake, Euphranor, if you think the minute philosophers idle theorists; they are men of practical views. *Euph.* As much as I love liberty, I should be afraid to live among such people; it would be, as Seneca somewhere expresseth it, *in libertate bellis ac tyrannis sæviore.* *Lys.* What do you mean by quoting Plato and Seneca? Can you imagine a free-thinker is to be influenced by the authority of such old-fashioned writers? *Euph.* You, Lysicles, and your friend have often quoted to me ingenious moderns, profound fine gentlemen, with new names of authors in the minute philosophy, to whose merits I am a perfect stranger. Suffer me in my turn to cite such authorities as I know, and have passed for many ages upon the world.

VII. But, authority apart, what do you say to experience? My observation can reach as far as a private family; and some wise men have thought, a family may be considered as a small kingdom, or a kingdom as a great family. Do you admit this to be true? *Lys.* If I say *yes*, you will make an inference, and if

I say *no*, you will demand a reason. The best way is to say nothing at all. There is, I see, no end of answering. *Euph.* If you give up the point you undertook to prove, there is an end at once: but if you hope to convince me you must answer my questions, and allow me the liberty to argue and infer. *Lys.* Well, suppose I admit that a kingdom may be considered as a great family. *Euph.* I shall ask you then, whether ever you knew private families thrive by those vices you think so beneficial to the public? *Lys.* Suppose I have not. *Euph.* Might not a man therefore by a parity of reason suspect their being of that benefit to the public? *Lys.* Fear not; the next age will thrive and flourish. *Euph.* Pray tell me, Lysicles; suppose you saw a fruit of a new, untried kind, would you recommend it to your own family to make a full meal of? *Lys.* I would not. *Euph.* Why then would you try upon your own country these maxims which were never admitted in any other? *Lys.* The experiment must begin somewhere; and we are resolved our own country shall have the honour and advantage of it. *Euph.* O Lysicles, hath not old England subsisted for many ages without the help of your notions? *Lys.* She has. *Euph.* And made some figure. *Lys.* I grant it. *Euph.* Why then should you make her run the risk of a new experiment, when it is certain she may do without it? *Lys.* But we would make her do better. We would produce a change in her that never was seen in any nation. *Euph.* Sallust observes, that a little before the downfall of the Roman empire, avarice (the effect of luxury) had erased the good old principles of probity and justice; had produced a contempt for religion, and made every thing venal, while ambition bred dissimulation, and caused men to unite in clubs and parties, not from honourable motives, but narrow and interested views. The same historian observes of that great freethinker Catiline, that he made it his business to insinuate himself into the acquaintance of young men, whose minds, unimproved by years and experience, were more easily seduced. I know not how it happens, but these passages have occurred to my thoughts more than once during this conversation. *Lys.* Sallust was a sententious pedant. *Euph.* But consult any historian, look into any writer. See, for instance, what Xenophon and Livy say of Sparta and Rome, and then tell me if vice be not the likeliest way to ruin and enslave a people. *Lys.* When a point is clear by its own evidence, I never think it worth while to consult old authors about it. *Cri.* It requires much thought and delicate observation to go to the bottom of things. But one who hath come at truth with difficulty can impart it with ease. I will, therefore, Euphranor, explain to you in three words (what none of your old writers ever dreamt of) the true cause of ruin to those states. You must know that vice and virtue,

being opposite and contradictory principles, both working at once in a state, will produce contrary effects, which intestine discord must needs tend to the dissolution and ruin of the whole. But it is the design of our minute philosophers, by making men wicked upon principle, a thing unknown to the ancients, so to weaken and destroy the force of virtue, that its effects shall not be felt in the public. In which case, vice being uncontrolled without let or impediment of principle, pure and genuine without allay of virtue, the nation must doubtless be very flourishing and triumphant. *Euph.* Truly, a noble scheme! *Cri.* And in a fair way to take effect. For our young proficients in the minute philosophy, having, by a rare felicity of education, no tincture of bigotry or prejudice, do far outgo the old standers and professors of the sect; who, though men of admirable parts, yet having had the misfortune to be imbued in their childhood with some religious notions, could never after get entirely rid of them; but still retain some small grains of conscience and superstition, which are a check upon the noblest genius. In proof of this, I remember that the famous minute philosopher, old Demodicus, came one day, from conversation upon business with Timander, a young gentleman of the same sect, full of astonishment. I am surprised, said he, to see so young, and withal so complete a villain; and, such was the force of prejudice, spoke of Timander with abhorrence, not considering that he was only the more egregious and profound philosopher of the two.

VIII. *Euph.* Though much may be hoped from the unprejudiced education of young gentlemen, yet it seems we are not to expect a settled and entire happiness, before vice reigns pure and unmixed: till then, much is to be feared from the dangerous struggle between vice and virtue, which may perchance overturn and dissolve this government, as it hath done others. *Lys.* No matter for that, if a better comes in its place. We have cleared the land of all prejudices towards government or constitution, and made them fly like other phantasms before the light of reason and good sense. Men who think deeply cannot see any reason why power should not change hands as well as property; or why the fashion of a government should not be changed as easy as that of a garment. The perpetual circulating and revolving of wealth and power, no matter through what or whose hands, is that which keeps up life and spirit in a state. Those who are even slightly read in our philosophy, know that of all prejudices the silliest is an attachment to forms. *Cri.* To say no more upon so clear a point, the overturning a government may be justified upon the same principles as the burning a town, would produce parallel effects, and equally contribute to the public good. In both cases, the natural springs of action are forcibly exerted: and in this general industry what one loses

another gets, a quick circulation of wealth and power making the sum total to flourish. *Euph.* And do the minute philosophers publish these things to the world? *Lys.* It must be confessed our writers proceed in politics with greater caution than they think necessary with regard to religion. *Cri.* But those things plainly follow from their principles, and are to be admitted for the genuine doctrine of the sect, expressed perhaps with more freedom and perspicuity than might be thought prudent by those who would manage the public, or not offend weak brethren. *Euph.* And pray, is there not need of caution, a rebel or incendiary being characters that many men have a prejudice against? *Lys.* Weak people of all ranks have a world of absurd prejudices. *Euph.* But the better sort, such as statesmen and legislators; do you think they have not the same indisposition towards admitting your principles? *Lys.* Perhaps they may; but the reason is plain. *Cri.* This puts me in mind of that ingenious philosopher, the gamester, Glaucus, who used to say, that statesmen and lawgivers may keep a stir about right and wrong, just and unjust, but that in truth, property of every kind had so often passed from the right owners by fraud and violence, that it was now to be considered as lying on the common, and with equal right belonged to every one that could seize it. *Euph.* What are we to think then of laws and regulations relating to right and wrong, crimes and duties? *Lys.* They serve to bind weak minds, and keep the vulgar in awe: but no sooner doth a true genius arise, but he breaks his way to greatness through all the trammels of duty, conscience, religion, law; to all which he showeth himself infinitely superior.

IX. *Euph.* You are, it seems, for bringing about a thorough reformation. *Lys.* As to what is commonly called the reformation, I could never see how or wherein the world was the better for it. It is much the same as popery, with this difference, that it is the more prude-like and disagreeable thing of the two. A noted writer of ours makes it too great a compliment, when he computes the benefit of hooped petticoats to be nearly equal to that of the reformation. Thorough reformation is thorough liberty. Leave nature at full freedom to work her own way, and all will be well. This is what we aim at, and nothing short of this can come up to our principles. Crito, who is a zealous protestant, hearing these words, could not refrain. The worst effect of the reformation, said he, was the rescuing wicked men from a darkness which kept them in awe. This, as it hath proved, was holding out light to robbers and murderers. Light in itself is good, and the same light which shows a man the folly of superstition, might show him the truth of religion, and the madness of atheism. But to make use of light, only to see the evils on one side, and never to see, but to run blindly upon the worse

extreme, this is to make the best of things produce evil, in the same sense that you prove the worst of things to produce good, to wit, accidentally or indirectly: and by the same method of arguing, you may prove that even diseases are useful: but whatever benefit seems to accrue to the public, either from disease of mind or body, is not their genuine offspring, and may be obtained without them. Lysicles was a little disconcerted by the affirmative air of Crito; but after a short pause replied briskly, that to contemplate the public good was not every one's talent. True, said Euphranor, I question whether every one can frame a notion of the public good, much less judge of the means to promote it.

X. But you, Lysicles, who are master of this subject, will be pleased to inform me, whether the public good of a nation doth not imply the particular good of its individuals? *Lys.* It doth. *Euph.* And doth not the good or happiness of a man consist in having both soul and body sound and in good condition, enjoying those things which their respective natures require, and free from those things which are odious or hurtful to them. *Lys.* I do not deny all this to be true. *Euph.* Now it should seem worth while to consider, whether the regular, decent life of a virtuous man may not as much conduce to this end, as the mad sallies of intemperance and debauchery. *Lys.* I will acknowledge that a nation may merely subsist, or be kept alive, but it is impossible it should flourish without the aid of vice. To produce a quick circulation of traffic and wealth in a state, there must be exorbitant and irregular motions in the appetites and passions. *Euph.* The more people a nation contains, and the happier those people are, the more that nation may be said to flourish. I think we are agreed in this point. *Lys.* We are. *Euph.* You allow then that riches are not an ultimate end, but should only be considered as the means to procure happiness. *Lys.* I do. *Euph.* It seems, that means cannot be of use without our knowing the end, and how to apply them to it. *Lys.* It seems so. *Euph.* Will it not follow, that in order to make a nation flourish, it is not sufficient to make it wealthy, without knowing the true end and happiness of mankind, and how to apply wealth towards attaining that end? In proportion as these points are known and practised, I think the nation should be likely to flourish. But for a people who neither know nor practise them, to gain riches, seems to me the same advantage that it would be for a sick man to come at plenty of meat and drink, which he could not use but to his hurt. *Lys.* This is mere sophistry; it is arguing without persuading. Look into common life; examine the pursuits of man; have a due respect for the consent of the world; and you will soon be convinced, that riches alone are sufficient to make a nation flourishing and happy. Give them riches and they will make themselves happy without

that political invention, that trick of statesmen and philosophers, called virtue.

XI. *Euph.* Virtue then, in your account, is a trick of statesmen. *Lys.* It is. *Euph.* Why then do your sagacious sect betray and divulge that trick or secret of state, which wise men have judged necessary for the good government of the world? Lysicles hesitating, Crito made answer, that he presumed it was because their sect, being wiser than all other wise men, disdained to see the world governed by wrong maxims, and would set all things on a right bottom. *Euph.* Thus much is certain. If we look into all institutions of government, and the political writings of such as have heretofore passed for wise men, we shall find a great regard for virtue. *Lys.* You shall find a strong tincture of prejudice: but, as I said before, consult the multitude if you would find nature and truth. *Euph.* But, among country gentlemen and farmers, and the better sort of tradesmen, is not virtue a reputable thing? *Lys.* You pick up authorities among men of low life and vile education. *Euph.* Perhaps we ought to pay a decent respect to the authority of minute philosophers. *Lys.* And I would fain know whose authority should be more considered, than that of those gentlemen who are alone above prejudice, and think for themselves. *Euph.* How doth it appear that you are the only unprejudiced part of mankind? May not a minute philosopher, as well as another man, be prejudiced in favour of the leaders of his sect? May not an atheistical education prejudice towards atheism? What should hinder a man's being prejudiced against religion, as well as for it? Or can you assign any reason why an attachment to pleasure, interest, vice, or vanity, may not be supposed to prejudice men against virtue? *Lys.* This is pleasant. What? suppose those very men influenced by prejudice, who are always disputing against it, whose constant aim it is to detect and demolish prejudices of all kinds! Except their own, replied Crito, for you must pardon me if I cannot help thinking they have some small prejudice, though not in favour of virtue.

XII. I observe, Lysicles, that you allowed to Euphranor, the greater number of happy people are in a state, the more that state may be said to flourish; it follows therefore, that such methods as multiply inhabitants are good, and such as diminish them are bad for the public. And one would think nobody need be told, that the strength of a state consists more in the number and sort of people, than in any thing else. But in proportion as vice and luxury, those public blessings encouraged by this minute philosophy, prevail among us, fewer are disposed to marry, too many being diverted by pleasure, disabled by disease, or frightened by expense. Nor doth vice only thin a nation, but also debaseth it by a puny degenerate race. I might add, that

it is ruinous to our manufacturers, both as it makes labour dear, and thereby enables our more frugal neighbours to undersell us; and also as it diverts the lower sort of people from honest callings to wicked projects. If these and such considerations were taken into the account, I believe it would be evident to any man in his senses, that the imaginary benefits of vice bear no proportion to the solid, real woes that attend it. Lysicles, upon this, shook his head, and smiled at Crito, without vouchsafing any other answer. After which, addressing himself to Euphranor, there cannot, said he, be a stronger instance of prejudice, than that a man should at this time of day preserve a reverence for that idol virtue, a thing so effectually exposed and exploded by the most knowing men of the age, who have shown, that a man is a mere engine, played upon and driven about by sensible objects; and that moral virtue is only a name, a notion, a chimera, an enthusiasm, or at best a fashion, uncertain and unchangeable, like all other fashions. *Euph.* What do you think, Lysicles, of health; doth it depend on fancy and caprice, or is it something real in the bodily composition of a man? *Lys.* Health is something real, which results from the right constitution and temperature of the organs and the fluids circulating through them. *Euph.* This you say is health of body. *Lys.* It is. *Euph.* And may we not suppose an healthy constitution of soul, when the notions are right, the judgments true, the will regular, the passions and appetites directed to their proper objects, and confined within due bounds? This, in regard to the soul, seems what health is to the body. And the man whose mind is so constituted, is he not properly called virtuous? And to produce this healthy disposition in the minds of his countrymen, should not every good man employ his endeavours? If these things have any appearance of truth, as to me they seem to have, it will not then be so clear a point that virtue is a mere whim or fashion, as you are pleased to represent it: I must own something unexpectedly, after what had been discoursed in last evening's conference, which if you would call to mind, it might perhaps save both of us some trouble. *Lys.* Would you know the truth, Euphranor? I must own I have quite forgot all your discourse about virtue, duty, and all such points, which, being of an airy, notional nature, are apt to vanish, and leave no trace on a mind accustomed only to receive impression from realities.

XIII. Having heard these words, Euphranor looked at Crito and me, and said smiling, I have mistaken my part; it was mine to learn, and his to instruct. Then addressing himself to Lysicles, Deal faithfully, said he, and let me know whether the public benefit of vice be in truth that which makes you plead for it? *Lys.* I love to speak frankly what I think. Know then, that private interest is the first and principal consideration with phi-

losophers of our sect. Now of all interests pleasure is that which hath the strongest charms, and no pleasures like those which are heightened and enlivened by license. Herein consists the peculiar excellency of our principles, that they show people how to serve their country by diverting themselves, causing the two streams of public spirit and self-love to unite and run in the same channel. I have told you already, that I admit a nation might subsist by the rules of virtue. But give me leave to say, it will barely subsist, in a dull, joyless, insipid state, whereas the sprightly excesses of vice inspire men with joy: and where particulars rejoice, the public, which is made up of particulars, must do so too; that is, the public must be happy. This I take to be an irrefragable argument. But to give you its full force, and make it as plain as possible, I will trace things from their original. Happiness is the end to which created beings naturally tend, but we find that all animals, whether men or brutes, do naturally and principally pursue real pleasure of sense, which is therefore to be thought their supreme good, their true end and happiness. It is for this men live, and whoever understands life must allow that man to enjoy the top and flower of it, who hath a quick sense of pleasure, and withal spirit, skill, and fortune sufficient to gratify every appetite and every taste. Niggards and fools will envy or traduce such a one because they cannot equal him. Hence all that sober trifling in disparagement of what every one would be master of if he could, a full freedom and unlimited scope of pleasure. *Euph.* Let me see whether I understand you. Pleasure of sense, you say, is the chief pleasure. *Lys.* I do. *Euph.* And this would be cramped and diminished by virtue. *Lys.* It would. *Euph.* Tell me, Lysicles, is pleasure then at the height when the appetites are satisfied? *Lys.* There is then only an indolence, the lively sense of pleasure being past. *Euph.* It should seem therefore, that the appetites must be always craving to preserve pleasure alive. *Lys.* That is our sense of the matter. *Euph.* The Greek philosopher therefore was in the right, who considered the body of a man of pleasure as a leaky vessel, always filling and never full. *Lys.* You may divert yourself with allegories, if you please. But all the while ours is literally the true taste of nature. Look throughout the universe, and you shall find birds and fishes, beasts and insects, all kinds of animals, with which the creation swarms, constantly engaged by instinct in the pursuit of sensible pleasure. And shall man alone be the grave fool who thwarts, and crosses, and subdues his appetites, whilst his fellow creatures do all most joyfully and freely indulge them? *Euph.* How! Lysicles. I thought that being governed by the senses, appetites, and passions, was the most grievous slavery; and that the proper business of free-thinkers, or philosophers, had been to set men free from

the power of ambition, avarice, and sensuality. *Lys.* You mistake the point. We make men relish the world, attentive to their interests, lively and luxurious in their pleasures, without fear or restraint either from God or man. We despise those preaching writers, who used to disturb or cramp the pleasures and amusements of human life. We hold, that a wise man who meddles with business, doth it altogether for his interest, and refers his interest to his pleasure. With us it is a maxim, that a man should sieze the moments as they fly. Without love, and wine, and play, and late hours, we hold life not to be worth living. I grant, indeed, that there is something gross and ill-bred in the vices of mean men, which the genteel philosopher abhors. *Cri.* But to cheat, whore, betray, get drunk, do all these things decently, this is true wisdom, and elegance of taste.

XIV. *Euph.* To me, who have been used to another way of thinking, this new philosophy seems difficult to digest. I must therefore beg leave to examine its principles, with the same freedom that you do those of other sects. *Lys.* Agreed. *Euph.* You say, if I mistake not, that a wise man pursues only his private interest, and that this consists in sensual pleasure, for proof whereof you appeal to nature. Is not this what you advance? *Lys.* It is. *Euph.* You conclude therefore, that as other animals are guided by natural instinct, man too ought to follow the dictates of sense and appetite. *Lys.* I do. *Euph.* But in this, do you not argue as if man had only sense and appetite for his guides, on which supposition there might be truth in what you say? But what if he hath intellect, reason, a higher instinct, and a nobler life? If this be the case, and you being man, live like a brute, is it not the way to be defrauded of your true happiness—to be mortified and disappointed? Consider most sorts of brutes; you shall perhaps find them have a greater share of sensual happiness than man. *Lys.* To our sorrow we do. This hath made several gentlemen of our sect envy brutes, and lament the lot of human kind. *Cri.* It was a consideration of this sort which inspired Erotylus with the laudable ambition of wishing himself a snail, upon hearing of certain particularities discovered in that animal by a modern virtuoso. *Euph.* Tell me, Lysicles, if you had an inexhaustible fund of gold and silver, should you envy another for having a little more copper than you? *Lys.* I should not. *Euph.* Are not reason, imagination, and sense faculties differing in kind, and in rank higher one than another. *Lys.* I do not deny it. *Euph.* Their acts therefore differ in kind. *Lys.* They do. *Euph.* Consequently the pleasures perfective of those acts are also different. *Lys.* They are. *Euph.* You admit therefore three sorts of pleasure; pleasure of reason, pleasure of imagination, and pleasure of sense. *Lys.* I do. *Euph.* And, as it is reasonable to think, the operation of the highest and noblest fa-

culty to be attended with the highest pleasure, may we not suppose the two former to be as gold or silver, and the latter only as copper? whence it should seem to follow, that man need not envy or imitate a brute. *Lys.* And nevertheless there are very ingenious men who do. And surely every one may be allowed to know what he wants, and wherein his true happiness consists. *Euph.* Is it not plain that different animals have different pleasures? Take a hog from his ditch or dunghill, lay him on a rich bed, treat him with sweetmeats, and music, and perfumes. All these things will be no entertainment to him. Do not a bird, a beast, a fish, amuse themselves in various manners, insomuch that what is pleasing to one may be death to another? Is it ever seen that one of those animals quits its own element or way of living, to adopt that of another? And shall man quit his own nature to imitate a brute? *Lys.* But sense is not only natural to brutes; is it not also natural to man? *Euph.* It is, but with this difference, it maketh the whole of a brute, but is the lowest part or faculty of a human soul. The nature of any thing is peculiarly that which doth distinguish it from other things, not what it hath in common with them. Do you allow this to be true? *Lys.* I do. *Euph.* And is not reason that which makes the principal difference between man and other animals? *Lys.* It is. *Euph.* Reason therefore being the principal part of our nature, whatever is most reasonable should seem most natural to man. Must we not therefore think rational pleasures more agreeable to human kind, than those of sense? Man and beast, having different natures, seem to have different faculties, different enjoyments, and different sorts of happiness. You can easily conceive, that the sort of life which makes the happiness of a mole or a bat, would be a very wretched one for an eagle. And may you not as well conceive that the happiness of a brute can never constitute the true happiness of a man? A beast, without reflection or remorse, without foresight, or appetite of immortality, without notion of vice, or virtue, or order, or reason, or knowledge! What motive, what grounds can there be for bringing down man, in whom are all these things, to a level with such a creature? What merit, what ambition in the minute philosopher to make such an animal a guide or rule for human life!

XV. *Lys.* It is strange, Euphranor, that one who admits freedom of thought, as you do, should yet be such a slave to prejudice. You still talk of order and virtue, as of real things, as if our philosophers had never demonstrated, that they have no foundation in nature, and are only the effects of education. I know, said Crito, how the minute philosophers are accustomed to demonstrate this point. They consider the animal nature of man, or man so far forth as he is animal; and it must be owned

that, considered in that light, he hath no sense of duty, no notion of virtue. He, therefore, who should look for virtue among mere animals, or human kind as such, would look in the wrong place. But that philosopher who is attentive only to the animal part of his being, and raiseth his theories from the very dregs of our species, might probably upon second thoughts find himself mistaken. Look you, Crito, said Lysicles, my argument is with Euphranor; to whom addressing his discourse—I observe, said he, that you stand much on the dignity of human nature. This thing of dignity is an old worn-out notion, which depends on other notions old, and stale, and worn out, such as an immaterial spirit, and a ray derived from the Divinity. But in these days men of sense make a jest of all this grandeur and dignity; and many there are would gladly exchange their share of it for the repose, and freedom, and sensuality of a brute. But comparisons are odious: waving therefore all inquiry concerning the respective excellencies of man and beast, and whether it is beneath a man to follow or imitate brute animals, in judging of the chief good and conduct of life and manners, I shall be content to appeal to the authority of men themselves, for the truth of my notions. Do but look abroad into the world, and ask the common run of men whether pleasure of sense be not the only true, solid, substantial good of their kind? *Euph.* But might not the same vulgar sort of men prefer a piece of sign-post painting to one of Raphael's, or a Grub-street ballad to an ode of Horace? Is there not a real difference between good and bad writing? *Lys.* There is. *Euph.* And yet you will allow there must be a maturity and improvement of understanding to discern this difference, which doth not make it therefore less real. *Lys.* I will. *Euph.* In the same manner what should hinder, but there may be in nature a true difference between vice and virtue, although it require some degree of reflection and judgment to observe it? In order to know whether a thing be agreeable to the rational nature of man, it seems one should rather observe and consult those who have most employed or improved their reason. *Lys.* Well, I shall not insist on consulting the common herd of mankind. From the ignorant and gross vulgar, I might myself appeal in many cases to men of rank and fashion. *Euph.* They are a sort of men I have not the honour to know much of by my own observation. But I remember a remark of Aristotle, who was himself a courtier and knew them well. "Virtue," saith he,* "and good sense are not the property of high birth or a great estate. Nor if they who possess these advantages, wanting a taste for rational pleasures, betake themselves to those of sense; ought we therefore to esteem them eligible, any more than we should the toys and pastimes of children, because they seem

* Ethic. ad Nicom. lib. x. c. 6.

so to them?" And indeed one may be allowed to question, whether the truest estimate of things was to be expected from a mind intoxicated with luxury, and dazzled with the splendour of high living.

> Cùm stupet insanis acies fulgoribus, et cùm
> Acclinis falsis animus meliora recusat. HOR.

Crito upon this observed, that he knew an English nobleman, who in the prime of life professeth a liberal art; and is the first man of his profession in the world; and that he was very sure he had more pleasure from the exercise of that elegant art, than from any sensual enjoyment within the power of one of the largest fortunes and most bountiful spirits in Great Britain.

XVI. *Lys.* But why need we have recourse to the judgment of other men in so plain a case? I appeal to your own breast, consult that, and then say if sensible pleasure be not the chief good of man. *Euph.* I, for my part, have often thought those pleasures which are highest in the esteem of sensualists, so far from being the chiefest good, that it seemed doubtful upon the whole, whether they were any good at all, any more than the mere removal of pain. Are not our wants and appetites uneasy? *Lys.* They are. *Euph.* Doth not sensual pleasure consist in satisfying them? *Lys.* It doth. *Euph.* But the cravings are tedious, the satisfaction momentary. Is it not so? *Lys.* It is, but what then? *Euph.* Why then it should seem that sensual pleasure is but a short deliverance from long pain. A long avenue of uneasiness leads to a point of pleasure, which ends in disgust or remorse. *Cri.* And he who pursues this *ignis fatuus* imagines himself a philosopher and free-thinker. *Lys.* Pedants are governed by words and notions, while the wiser men of pleasure follow fact, nature, and sense. *Cri.* But what if notional pleasures should in fact prove the most real and lasting? Pure pleasures of reason and imagination neither hurt the health, nor waste the fortune, nor gall the conscience. By them the mind is long entertained without loathing or satiety. On the other hand a notion (which with you it seems passeth for nothing) often embitters the most lively sensual pleasures, which at bottom will be found also to depend upon notion more than perhaps you imagine, it being a vulgar remark, that those things are more enjoyed by hope and foretaste of the soul than by possession. Thus much is yielded, that the actual enjoyment is very short, and the alternative of appetite and disgust long as well as uneasy. So that, upon the whole, it should seem those gentlemen, who are called men of pleasure from their eager pursuit of it, do in reality, with great expense of fortune, ease, and health, purchase pain. *Lys.* You may spin out plausible arguments, but will after all find it a difficult matter to convince me

that so many ingenious men should not be able to distinguish between things so directly opposite as pain and pleasure. How is it possible to account for this? *Cri.* I believe a reason may be assigned for it, but to men of pleasure no truth is so palatable as a fable. Jove once upon a time having ordered, that pleasure and pain should be mixed in equal proportions in every dose of human life, upon a complaint that some men endeavoured to separate what he had joined, and taking more than their share of the sweet, would leave all the sour for others, commanded Mercury to put a stop to this evil, by fixing on each delinquent a pair of invisible spectacles, which should change the appearance of things, making pain look like pleasure, and pleasure like pain, labour like recreation, and recreation like labour. From that time the men of pleasure are eternally mistaking and repenting. *Lys.* If your doctrine takes place I would fain know what can be the advantage of a great fortune, which all mankind so eagerly pursue? *Cri.* It is a common saying with Eucrates, that a great fortune is an edged tool, which a hundred may come at, for one who knows how to use it; so much easier is the art of getting than that of spending. What its advantage is I will not say, but I will venture to declare what it is not. I am sure that where abundance excludes want, and enjoyment prevents appetites, there is not the quickest sense of those pleasures we have been speaking of, in which the footman hath often a greater share than his lord, who cannot enlarge his stomach in proportion to his estate.

XVII. Reasonable and well educated men of all ranks have, I believe, pretty much the same amusements, notwithstanding the difference of their fortunes: but those who are particularly distinguished as men of pleasure seem to possess it in a very small degree. *Euph.* I have heard that among persons of that character, a game of cards is esteemed a chief diversion. *Lys.* Without cards there could be no living for people of fashion. It is the most delightful way of passing an evening when gentlemen and ladies are got together, who would otherwise be at a loss what to say or do with themselves. But a pack of cards is so engaging, that it doth not only employ them when they are met, but serves to draw them together. Quadrille gives them pleasure in prospect during the dull hours of the day; they reflect on it with delight, and it furnishes discourse when it is over. *Cri.* One would be apt to suspect these people of condition pass their time but heavily, and are but little the better for their fortunes, whose chief amusement is a thing in the power of every porter or footman, who is as well qualified to receive pleasure from cards as a peer. I can easily conceive that when people of a certain turn are got together, they should prefer doing anything to the ennui of their own conversation; but it is not easy to

conceive there is any great pleasure in this. What a card-table can afford requires neither parts nor fortune to judge of. *Lys.* Play is a serious amusement that comes to the relief of a man of pleasure, after the more lively and affecting enjoyments of sense. It kills time beyond any thing, and is a most admirable anodyne to divert or prevent thought, which might otherwise prey upon the mind. *Cri.* I can easily comprehend, that no man upon earth ought to prize anodynes for the spleen, more than a man of fashion and pleasure. An ancient sage, speaking of one of that character, saith he is made wretched by disappointments and appetites, λυπεῖται ἀποτυγχάνων καὶ ἐπιθυμῶν. And if this was true of the Greeks who lived in the sun, and had so much spirit, I am apt to think it is still more so of our modern English. Something there is in our climate and complexion, that makes idleness nowhere so much its own punishment as in England, where an uneducated fine gentleman pays for his momentary pleasures, with long and cruel intervals of spleen; for relief of which he is driven into sensual excesses, that produce a proportionable depression of spirits, which, as it createth a greater want of pleasures, so it lessens the ability to enjoy them. There is a cast of thought in the complexion of an Englishman, which renders him the most unsuccessful rake in the world. He is (as Aristotle expresseth it) at variance with himself. He is neither brute enough to enjoy his appetites, nor man enough to govern them. He knows and feels that what he pursues is not his true good, his reflection serving only to show him that misery which his habitual sloth and indolence will not suffer him to remedy. At length being grown odious to himself, and abhorring his own company, he runs into every idle assembly, not from the hopes of pleasure, but merely to respite the pain of his own mind. Listless and uneasy at the present, he hath no delight in reflecting on what is past, or in the prospect of any thing to come. This man of pleasure, when, after a wretched scene of vanity and woe, his animal nature is worn to the stumps, wishes and dreads death by turns, and is sick of living, without having ever tried or known the true life of man. *Euph.* It is well this sort of life, which is of so little benefit to the owner, conduceth so much to that of the public. But pray tell me, do these gentlemen set up for minute philosophers? *Cri.* That sect, you must know, contains two sorts of philosophers, the wet and the dry. Those I have been describing are of the former kind. They differ rather in practice than in theory. As an older, graver, or duller man from one that is younger, and more capable or fond of pleasure. The dry philosopher passeth his time but drily. He has the honour of pimping for the vices of more sprightly men, who in return offer some small incense to his vanity. Upon this encouragement, and to make his own mind easy when it is

past being pleased, he employs himself in justifying those excesses he cannot partake in. But to return to your question, those miserable folk are mighty men for the minute philosophy. *Euph.* What hinders them then from putting an end to their lives? *Cri.* Their not being persuaded of the truth of what they profess. Some, indeed, in a fit of despair do now and then lay violent hands on themselves. And as the minute philosophy prevails, we daily see more examples of suicide. But they bear no proportion to those who would put an end to their lives if they durst. My friend Clinias, who had been one of them, and a philosopher of rank, let me into the secret history of their doubts, and fears, and irresolute resolutions of making away with themselves, which last he assures me is a frequent topic with men of pleasure, when they have drunk themselves into a little spirit. It was by virtue of this mechanical valour the renowned philosopher Hermocrates shot himself through the head. The same thing hath since been practised by several others to the great relief of their friends. Splenetic, worried, and frightened out of their wits, they run upon their doom, with the same courage as a bird runs into the mouth of a rattlesnake, not because they are bold to die, but because they are afraid to live. Clinias endeavoured to fortify his irreligion by the discourse and opinion of other minute philosophers, who were mutually strengthened in their own unbelief by his. After this manner, authority working in a circle, they endeavoured to atheize one another. But though he pretended even to a demonstration against the being of a God, yet he could not inwardly conquer his own belief. He fell sick, and acknowledged this truth, is now a sober man and a good Christian; owns he was never so happy as since he became such, nor so wretched as while he was a minute philosopher. And he who has tried both conditions may be allowed a proper judge of both. *Lys.* Truly a fine account of the brightest and bravest men of the age. *Cri.* Bright and brave are fine attributes. But our curate is of opinion that all your free-thinking rakes are either fools or cowards. Thus he argues; if such a man doth not see his true interest he wants sense, if he doth but dare not pursue it, he wants courage. In this manner, from the defect of sense and courage, he deduceth that whole species of men, who are so apt to value themselves upon both those qualities. *Lys.* As for their courage they are at all times ready to give proof of it; and for their understanding, thanks to nature, it is of a size not to be measured by country parsons.

XVIII. *Euph.* But Socrates, who was no country parson, suspected your men of pleasure were such through ignorance. *Lys.* Ignorance of what? *Euph.* Of the art of computing. It was his opinion that rakes cannot reckon.* And that for want

* Plato in Protag.

of this skill they make wrong judgments about pleasure, on the right choice of which their happiness depends. *Lys.* I do not understand you. *Euph.* Do you grant that sense perceiveth only sensible things? *Lys.* I do. *Euph.* Sense perceiveth only things present. *Lys.* This too I grant. *Euph.* Future pleasures, therefore, and pleasures of the understanding, are not to be judged of by actual sense. *Lys.* They are not. *Euph.* Those therefore who judge of pleasure by sense, may find themselves mistaken at the foot of the account.

> Cùm lapidosa chiragra
> Contudit articulos veteris ramalia fagi,
> Tum crassos transisse dies lucemque palustrem,
> Et sibi jam seri vitam ingemuere relictam.*

To make a right computation, should you not consider all the faculties and all the kinds of pleasure, taking into your account the future as well as the present, and rating them all according to their true value? *Cri.* The Epicureans themselves allowed, that pleasure which procures a greater pain, or hinders a greater pleasure, should be regarded as a pain: and, that pain which procures a greater pleasure, or prevents a greater pain, is to be accounted a pleasure. In order therefore to make a true estimate of pleasure, the great spring of action, and that from whence the conduct of life takes its bias, we ought to compute intellectual pleasures and future pleasures, as well as present and sensible: we ought to make allowance, in the valuation of each particular pleasure, for all the pains and evils, for all the disgust, remorse, and shame that attend it: we ought to regard both kind and quantity, the sincerity, the intenseness, and the duration of pleasures. *Euph.* And all these points duly considered, will not Socrates seem to have had reason of his side, when he thought ignorance made rakes, and particularly their being ignorant of what he calls the science of more and less, greater and smaller, equality and comparison, that is to say of the art of computing? *Lys.* All this discourse seems notional. For real abilities of every kind, it is well known, we have the brightest men of the age among us. But all those who know the world do calculate that what you call a good Christian, who hath neither a large conscience, nor unprejudiced mind, must be unfit for the affairs of it. Thus you see, while you compute youselves out of pleasure, others compute you out of business. What then are you good for with all your computation? *Euph.* I have all imaginable respect for the abilities of free-thinkers. My only fear was, their parts might be too lively for such slow talents as forecast and computation, the gifts of ordinary men.

XIX. *Cri.* I cannot make them the same compliment that Euphranor does. For though I shall not pretend to characterize

* Persius, Sat. 5.

the whole sect, yet thus much I may truly affirm, that those who have fallen in my way have been mostly raw men of pleasure, old sharpers in business, or a third sort of lazy sciolists, who are neither men of business, nor men of speculation, but set up for judges or critics in all kinds, without having made a progress in any. These among men of the world pass for profound theorists, and among speculative men would seem to know the world; a conceited race, equally useless to the affairs and studies of mankind. Such as these, for the most part, seem to be sectaries of the minute philosophy. I will not deny that now and then you may meet with a man of easy manners, that, without those faults and affectations, is carried into the party by the mere stream of education, fashion, or company; all which do in this age prejudice men against religion, even those who mechanically rail at prejudice. I must not forget that the minute philosophers have also a strong party among the beaux and fine ladies; and, as affectations out of character are often the strongest, there is nothing so dogmatical and inconvincible as one of these fine things, when it sets up for free-thinking. But, be these professors of the sect never so dogmatical, their authority must needs be small with men of sense: for who would choose for his guide in the search for truth a man whose thoughts and time are taken up with dress, visits, and diversions? or whose education hath been behind a counter, or in an office? or whose speculations have been employed on the forms of business, who are only well read in the ways and commerce of mankind in stock-jobbing, purloining, supplanting, bribing? Or would any man in his senses give a fig for meditations and discoveries made over a bottle? And yet it is certain, that instead of thought, books, and study, most free-thinkers are the proselytes of a drinking club. Their principles are often settled, and decisions on the deepest points made, when they are not fit to make a bargain. *Lys.* You forget our writers, Crito. They make a world of proselytes. *Cri.* So would worse writers in such a cause. Alas! how few read! and of these, how few are able to judge! How many wish your notions true! How many had rather be diverted than instructed! How many are convinced by a title! I may allow your reasons to be effectual, without allowing them to be good. Arguments, in themselves of small weight, have great effect, when they are recommended by a mistaken interest, when they are pleaded for by passion, when they are countenanced by the humour of the age; and above all, with some sort of men, when they are against law, government, and established opinions, things which, as a wise or good man would not depart from without clear evidence, a weak or a bad man will affect to disparage on the slightest grounds. *Lys.* And yet the arguments of our philosophers alarm. *Cri.* The force of their reasoning is not what alarms; their contempt of laws and govern-

ment is alarming, their application to the young and ignorant is dangerous. *Euph.* But without disputing or disparaging their talent at ratiocination, it seems very possible their success might not be owing to that alone. May it not in some measure be ascribed to the defects of others, as well as to their own perfections? My friend Eucrates used to say, that the church would thrive and flourish beyond all opposition, if some certain persons minded piety more than politics, practics than polemics, fundamentals than consectaries, substance than circumstance, things than notions, and notions than words. *Lys.* Whatever may be the cause, the effects are too plain to be denied. And when a considering man observes that our notions do, in this most learned and knowing age, spread and multiply, in opposition to established laws, and every day gain ground against a body so numerous, so learned, so well supported, protected, encouraged for the service and defence of religion: I say, when a man observes and considers all this, he will be apt to ascribe it to the force of truth, and the merits of our cause; which, had it been supported with the revenues and establishments of the church and universities, you may guess what a figure it would make, by the figure that it makes without them. *Euph.* It is much to be pitied, that the learned professors of your sect do not meet with the encouragement they deserve. *Lys.* All in due time. People begin to open their eyes. It is not impossible but those revenues that in ignorant times were applied to a wrong use, may hereafter, in a more enlightened age, be applied to a better. *Cri.* But why professors and encouragement for what needs no teaching? An acquaintance of mine has a most ingenious footman that can neither write nor read, who learned your whole system in half an hour: he knows when and how to nod, shake his head, smile, and give a hint as well as the ablest sceptic, and is in fact a very minute philosopher. *Lys.* Pardon me, it takes time to unlearn religious prejudices, and requires a strong head. *Cri.* I do not know how it might have been once upon a time. But in the present laudable education, I know several who have been imbued with no religious notions at all; and others who have had them so very slight, that they rubbed off without the least pains.

XX. Panope young and beautiful, under the care of her aunt, and admirer of the minute philosophy, was kept from learning the principles of religion, that she might not be accustomed to believe without a reason, nor assent to what she did not comprehend. Panope was not indeed prejudiced with religious notions, but got a notion of intriguing, and a notion of play, which ruined her reputation by fourteen, and her fortune by four and twenty. I have often reflected on the different fate of two brothers in my neighbourhood. Cleon, the elder, being designed an accomplished gentleman, was sent to town, and had the first part of his education

in a great school: what religion he learned there was soon unlearned in a certain celebrated society, which, till we have a better, may pass for a nursery of minute philosophers. Cleon dressed well, could cheat at cards, had a nice palate, understood the mystery of the die, was a mighty man in the minute philosophy: and having shined a few years in these accomplishments, he died before thirty, childless and rotten, expressing the utmost indignation that he could not outlive that old dog his father; who having a great notion of polite manners, and knowledge of the world, had purchased them to his favourite son with much expense, but had been more frugal in the education of Chærephon, the younger son, who was brought up at a country-school, and entered a commoner in the university, where he qualified himself for a parsonage in his father's gift, which he is now possessed of, together with the estate of the family, and a numerous offspring. *Lys.* A pack of unpolished cubs, I warrant. *Cri.* Less polished, perhaps, but more sound, more honest, and more useful than many who pass for fine gentlemen. Crates, a worthy justice of the peace in this county, having had a son miscarry at at London, by the conversation of a minute philosopher, used to say with a great air of complaint, If a man spoils my corn, or hurts my cattle, I have a remedy against him; but if he spoils my children, I have none. *Lys.* I warrant you, he was for penal methods: he would have had a law to persecute tender consciences. *Cri.* The tender conscience of a minute philosopher! He who tutored the son of Crates, soon after did justice on himself. For he taught Lycidas, a modest young man, the principles of his sect. Lycidas, in return, debauched his daughter, an only child: upon which, Charmides (that was the minute philosopher's name) hanged himself. Old Bubalion in the city is carking, and starving, and cheating, that his son may drink and game, keep mistresses, hounds, horses, and die in a jail. Bubalion nevertheless thinks himself wise, and passeth for one that minds the main chance. He is a minute philosopher, which learning he acquired behind the counter from the works of Prodicus and Tryphon. This same Bubalion was one night at supper, talking against the immortality of the soul with two or three grave citizens, one of whom the next day declared himself bankrupt, with five thousand pounds of Bubalion's in his hands; and the night following he received a note from a servant, who had during his lecture waited at table, demanding the sum of fifty guineas to be laid under a stone, and concluding with most terrible threats and imprecations. *Lys.* Not to repeat what had been already demonstrated, that the public is at bottom no sufferer by such accidents, which in truth are inconvenient only to private persons, who in their turn too may reap the benefit of them; I say, not to repeat all that hath been demonstrated on that head, I shall only ask you

whether there would not be rakes and rogues, although we did not make them? Believe me, the world always was, and always will be the same, as long as men are men. *Cri.* I deny that the world is always the same. Human nature, to use Alciphron's comparison, is like land, better or worse, as it is improved, and according to the seeds or principles sown in it. Though nobody held your tenets, I grant there might be bad men by the force of corrupt appetites and irregular passions: but where men, to the force of appetite and passion, add that of opinion, and are wicked from principle, there will be more men wicked, and those more incurably and outrageously so. The error of a lively rake lies in his passions, and may be reformed: but the dry rogue, who sets up for judgment, is incorrigible. It is an observation of Aristotle's, that there are two sort of debauchees, the ἀκρατής and the ἀκόλαστος, of which the one is so against his judgment, the other with it, and that there may be hopes of the former, but none of the latter. And in fact I have always observed, that a rake who is a minute philosopher, when grown old, becomes a sharper in business. *Lys.* I could name you several such who have grown most noted patriots. *Cri.* Patriots? such patriots as Catiline and Marc Antony. *Lys.* And what then? Those famous Romans were brave though unsuccessful. They wanted neither sense nor courage, and if their schemes had taken effect, the brisker part of their countrymen had been much the better for them.

XXI. The wheels of government go on, though wound up by different hands; if not in the same form, yet in some other, perhaps a better. There is an endless variety in nature: weak men, indeed, are prejudiced towards rules and systems in life and government; and think if these are gone all is gone: but a man of a great soul and free spirit delights in the noble experiment of blowing up systems and dissolving governments, to mould them anew upon other principles and in another shape. Take my word for it; there is a plastic nature in things that seeks its own end. Pull a state to pieces, jumble, confound, and shake together the particles of human society, and then let them stand awhile, and you shall soon see them settle of themselves in some convenient order, where heavy heads are lowest, and men of genius uppermost. *Euph.* Lysicles speaks his mind freely. *Lys.* Where was the advantage of free-thinking if it were not attended with free speaking, or of free speaking if it did not produce free acting? We are for absolute, independent, original freedom in thought, word, and deed. Inward freedom, without outward, is good for nothing but to set a man's judgment at variance with his practice. *Cri.* This free way of Lysicles may seem new to you; it is not so to me. As the minute philosophers lay it down for a maxim, that there is nothing sacred of any kind, nothing

but what may be made a jest of, exploded, and changed like the fashion of their clothes, so nothing is more frequent than for them to utter their schemes and principles, not only in select companies, but even in public. In a certain part of the world, where ingenious men are wont to retail their speculations, I remember to have seen a valetudinarian in a long wig and cloak sitting at the upper end of a table, with half a dozen of disciples about him. After he had talked about religion in a manner and with an air that would make one think atheism established by law, and religion only tolerated, he entered upon civil government, and observed to his audience, that the natural world was in a perpetual circulation: animals, said he, who draw their sustenance from the earth, mix with that same earth, and in their turn become food for vegetables, which again nourish the animal kind: the vapours that ascend from this globe descend back upon it in showers: the elements alternately prey upon each other: that which one part of nature loseth another gains, the sum total remaining always the same, being neither bigger nor lesser, better nor worse for all these intestine changes. Even so, said this learned professor, the revolutions in the civil world are no detriment to human kind, one part whereof rises as the other falls, and wins by another's loss. A man therefore who thinks deeply, and hath an eye on the whole system, is no more a bigot to government than to religion. He knows how to suit himself to occasions, and make the best of every event: for the rest, he looks on all translations of power and property from one hand to another with a philosophic indifference. Our lecturer concluded his discourse with a most ingenious analysis of all political and moral virtues into their first principles and causes, showing them to be mere fashions, tricks of state, and illusions on the vulgar. *Lys.* We have been often told of the good effects of religion and learning, churches and universities: but I dare affirm, that a dozen or two ingenious men of our sect have done more towards advancing real knowledge, by extemporaneous lectures, in the compass of a few years, than all the ecclesiastics put together for as many centuries. *Euph.* And the nation no doubt thrives accordingly: but it seems, Crito, you have heard them discourse. *Cri.* Upon hearing this and other lectures of the same tendency, methought it was needless to establish professors for the minute philosophy in either university, while there are so many spontaneous lecturers in every corner of the streets, ready to open men's eyes, and rub off their prejudices about religion, loyalty, and public spirit. *Lys.* If wishing was to any purpose, I could wish for a telescope that might draw into my view things future in time, as well as distant in place. Oh! that I could but look into the next age, and behold what it is that we are preparing to be, the glorious harvest of our principles, the spreading of which

hath produced a visible tendency in the nation towards something great and new. *Cri.* One thing I dare say you would expect to see, be the changes and agitations of the public what they will, that is, every free-thinker upon his legs. You are all sons of nature, who cheerfully follow the fortunes of the common mass. *Lys.* And it must be owned we have a maxim, that *each should take care of one.* *Cri.* Alas, Lysicles, you wrong your own character. You would fain pass upon the world and upon yourselves for interested cunning men: but can any thing be more disinterested than to sacrifice all regards to the abstracted speculation of truth? Or can any thing be more void of all cunning than to publish your discoveries to the world, teach others to play the whole game, and arm mankind against yourselves?

XXII. If a man may venture to suggest so mean a thought as the love of their country, to souls fired with the love of truth and the love of liberty, and grasping the whole extent of nature, I would humbly propose it to you, gentlemen, to observe the caution practised by all other discoverers, projectors, and makers of experiments, who never hazard all on the first trial. Would it not be prudent to try the success of your principles on a small model in some remote corner? For instance, set up a colony of atheists in Monomotapa, and see how it prospers before you proceed any further at home: half a dozen ship-load of minute philosophers might easily be spared upon so good a design. In the mean time you, gentlemen, who have found out that there is nothing to be hoped or feared in another life, that conscience is a bugbear, that the bands of government and the cement of human society are rotten things, to be dissolved and crumbled into nothing by the argumentation of every minute philosopher, be so good as to keep these sublime discoveries to yourselves: suffer us, our wives, our children, our servants, and our neighbours, to continue in the belief and way of thinking established by the laws of our country. In good earnest, I wish you would go try your experiments among the Hottentots or Turks. *Lys.* The Hottentots we think well of, believing them to be an unprejudiced people: but it is to be feared their diet and customs would not agree with our philosophers. As for the Turks, they are bigots, who have a notion of God and a respect for Jesus Christ: I question whether it might be safe to venture among them. *Cri.* Make your experiment then in some other part of Christendom. *Lys.* We hold all other Christian nations to be much under the power of prejudice: even our neighbours the Dutch are too much prejudiced in favour of their religion by law established, for a prudent man to attempt innovations under their government. Upon the whole it seems, we can execute our schemes no where with so much security and such prospect of success as at home. Not to say that we have already made a

good progress. Oh! that we could but once see a parliament of true, staunch, libertine free-thinkers! *Cri.* God forbid! I should be sorry to have such men for my servants, not to say, for my masters. *Lys.* In that we differ.

XXIII. But you will agree with me, that the right way to come at this, was to begin with extirpating the prejudices of particular persons. We have carried on this work for many years with much art and industry, and at first with secresy, working like moles under ground, concealing our progress from the public, and our ultimate views from many, even of our own proselytes, blowing the coals between polemical divines, laying hold on and improving every incident, which the passions and folly of churchmen afforded, to the advantage of our sect. As our principles obtained, we still proceeded to further inferences; and as our numbers multiplied, we gradually disclosed ourselves and our opinions: where we are now I need not say. We have stubbed, and weeded, and cleared human nature to that degree, that in a little time, leaving it alone without any labouring or teaching, you shall see natural and just ideas sprout forth of themselves. *Cri.* But I have heard a man, who had lived long and observed much, remark, that the worst and most unwholesome weed was this same minute philosophy. We have had, said he, divers epidemical distempers in the state, but this hath produced of all others the most destructive plague. Enthusiasm had its day, its effects were violent and soon over: this infects more quietly, but spreads widely: the former bred a fever in the state, this breeds a consumption and final decay. A rebellion or an invasion alarms, and puts the public upon its defence; but a corruption of principles works its ruin more slowly perhaps, but more surely. This may be illustrated by a fable I somewhere met with in the writings of a Swiss philosopher, setting forth the original of brandy and gunpowder. The government of the north being once upon a time vacant, the prince of the power of the air convened a council in hell, wherein upon competition between two demons of rank, it was determined they should both make trial of their abilities, and he should succeed who did most mischief. One made his appearance in the shape of gunpowder, the other in that of brandy: the former was a declared enemy, and roared with a terrible noise, which made folks afraid, and put them on their guard: the other passed as a friend and a physician through the world, disguised himself with sweets, and perfumes, and drugs, made his way into the ladies' cabinets, and the apothecaries' shops, and under the notion of helping digestion, comforting the spirits, and cheering the heart, produced direct contrary effects; and having insensibly thrown great numbers of human kind into a lingering but fatal decay, was found to people hell and the grave so fast, as to merit the government which he still possesses.

XXIV. *Lys.* Those who please may amuse themselves with fables and allegories. This is plain English: liberty is a good thing, and we are the support of liberty. *Cri.* To me it seems that liberty and virtue were made for each other. If any man wish to enslave his country, nothing is a fitter preparative than vice; and nothing leads to vice so surely as irreligion. For my part, I cannot comprehend or find out, after having considered it in all lights, how this crying down religion should be the effect of honest views towards a just and legal liberty. Some seem to propose an indulgence in vice. Others may have in prospect the advantages which needy and ambitious men are used to make in the ruin of a state: one may indulge a pert, petulant spirit; another hope to be esteemed among libertines, when he wants wit to please or abilities to be useful. But, be men's views what they will, let us examine what good your principles have done; who has been the better for the instructions of these minute philosophers? Let us compare what we are in respect of learning, loyalty, honesty, wealth, power, and public spirit, with what we have been. Free-thinking (as it is called) hath wonderfully grown of late years. Let us see what hath grown up with it, or what effects it hath produced. To make a catalogue of ills is disagreeable; and the only blessing it can pretend to is luxury: that same blessing which revenged the world upon old Rome: that same luxury that makes a nation, like a diseased, pampered body, look full and fat with one foot in the grave. *Lys.* You mistake the matter. There are no people who think and argue better about the public good of a state than our sect; who have also invented many things tending to that end, which we cannot as yet conveniently put in practice. *Cri.* But one point there is from which it must be owned the public hath already received some advantage, which is the effect of your principles flowing from them, and spreading as they do: I mean that old Roman practice of self-murder, which at once puts an end to all distress, ridding the world and themselves of the miserable. *Lys.* You were pleased before to make some reflections on this custom, and laugh at the irresolution of our free-thinkers: but I can aver for matter of fact, that they have often recommended it by their example as well as arguments, and that it is solely owing to them that a practice, so useful and magnanimous, hath been taken out of the hands of lunatics, and restored to that credit among men of sense, which it anciently had. In whatever light you may consider it, this is in fact a solid benefit: but the best effect of our principles is that light and truth so visibly shed abroad in the world. From how many prejudices, errors, perplexities, and contradictions have we freed the minds of our fellow-subjects! How many hard words and intricate, absurd notions had possessed the minds of men before our philosophers appeared in

the world! But now even women and children have right and sound notions of things. What say you to this, Crito? *Cri.* I say with respect to these great advantages of destroying men and notions, that I question whether the public gains as much by the latter as it loseth by the former. For my own part, I had rather my wife and children all believed what they had no notion of, and daily pronounced words without a meaning, than that any one of them should cut his throat, or leap out of a window. Errors and nonsense, as such, are of small concern in the eyes of the public, which considers not the metaphysical truth of notions so much as the tendency they have to produce good or evil. Truth itself is valued by the public, as it hath an influence, and is felt in the course of life. You may confute a whole shelf of schoolmen, and discover many speculative truths, *without* any great merit towards your country. But if I am not mistaken, the minute philosophers are not the men to whom we are most beholden for discoveries of that kind: this I say must be allowed, supposing, what I by no means grant, your notions to be true. For, to say plainly what I think, the tendency of your opinions is so bad, that no good man can endure them, and your arguments for them so weak, that no wise man will admit them. *Lys.* Has it not been proved as clear as the meridian sun, that the polite sort of men lead much happier lives, and swim in pleasure, since the spreading of our principles? But not to repeat or insist further on what has been so amply deduced, I shall only *add that* the advantages flowing from them extend to the tenderest age and the softer sex: our principles deliver children from terrors by night, and ladies from splenetic hours by day. Instead of these old-fashioned things, prayers and the bible, the grateful amusements of drams, dice, and billets-doux have succeeded. The fair sex have now nothing to do but dress and paint, drink and game, adorn and divert themselves, and enter into all the sweet society of life. *Cri.* I thought, Lysicles, the argument from pleasure had been exhausted: but since you have not done with that point, let us once more by Euphranor's rule cast up the account of pleasure and pain, as credit and debt, under distinct articles. We will set down in the life of your fine lady rich clothes, dice, cordials, scandal, late hours, against vapours, distaste, remorse, losses at play, and the terrible distress of ill spent age increasing every day: suppose no cruel accident of jealousy, no madness or infamy of love, yet at the foot of the account you shall find that empty, giddy, gaudy, fluttering thing, not half so happy as a butterfly or a grasshopper on a summer's day: and for a rake or man of pleasure, the reckoning will be much the same, if you place listlessness, ignorance, *rottenness*, loathing, craving, quarrelling, and such qualities or accomplishments, over against his little circle of fleeting amusements, long

woe against momentary pleasure; and if it be considered that, when sense and appetite go off, though he seek refuge from his conscience in the minute philosophy, yet in this you will find, if you sift him to the bottom, that he affects much, believes little, knows nothing. Upon which Lysicles turning to me, observed, that Crito might dispute against fact if he pleased, but that every one must see the nation was the merrier for their principles. True, answered Crito, we are a merry nation indeed: young men laugh at the old; children despise their parents; and subjects make a jest of the government: happy effects of the minute philosophy!

XXV. *Lys.* Infer what effects you please: that will not make our principles less true. *Cri.* Their truth is not what I am now considering. The point at present is the usefulness of your principles; and to decide this point we need only take a short view of them fairly proposed and laid together: that there is no God or providence; that man is as the beasts that perish; that his happiness, as theirs, consists in obeying animal instincts, appetites, and passions; that all stings of conscience and sense of guilt are prejudices and errors of education; that religion is a state trick; that vice is beneficial to the public; that the soul of man is corporeal, and dissolveth like a flame or vapour; that man is a machine actuated according to the laws of motion; that consequently he is no agent, or subject of guilt; that a wise man will make his own particular individual interest in this present life the rule and measure of all his actions: these and such opinions are, it seems, the tenets of a minute philosopher, who is himself according to his own principles an organ played on by sensible objects, a ball bandied about by appetites and passions; so subtle is he as to be able to maintain all this by artful reasonings; so sharp-sighted and penetrating to the very bottom of things as to find out, that the most interested occult cunning is the only true wisdom. To complete his character, this curious piece of clock-work, having no principle of action within itself, and denying that it hath or can have any one free thought or motion, sets up for the patron of liberty, and earnestly contends for *free-thinking*. Crito had no sooner made an end, but Lysicles addressed himself to Euphranor and me; Crito, said he, has taken a world of pains, but convinced me only of one single point, to wit, that I must despair of convincing him. Never did I in the whole course of my life meet with a man so deeply immersed in prejudice: let who will pull him out for me. But I entertain better hopes of you. I can answer, said I, for myself, that my eyes and ears are always open to conviction: I am attentive to all that passes, and upon the whole shall form, whether right or wrong, a very impartial judgment. Crito, said Euphranor, is a more enterprising man than I, thus to rate and

lecture a philosopher. For my part, I always find it easier to learn than to teach. I shall therefore beg your assistance to rid me of some scruples about the tendency of your opinions, which I find myself unable to master, though never so willing. This done, though we should not tread exactly in the same steps, nor perhaps go the same road: yet we shall not run in all points diametrically opposite one to another.

XXVI. Tell me now, Lysicles, you who are a minute observer of things, whether a shade be more agreeable at morning, or evening, or noon-day. *Lys.* Doubtless at noon-day. *Euph.* And what disposeth men to rest? *Lys.* Exercise. *Euph.* When do men make the greatest fires? *Lys.* In the coldest weather. *Euph.* And what creates a love for icy liquors? *Lys.* Excessive heat. *Euph.* What if you raise a pendulum to a great height on one side? *Lys.* It will, when left to itself, ascend so much the higher on the other. *Euph.* It should seem therefore, that darkness ensues from light, rest from motion, heat from cold, and in general that one extreme is the consequence of another. *Lys.* It should seem so. *Euph.* And doth not this observation hold in the civil as well as natural world? Doth not power produce license, and license power? Do not whigs make tories, and tories whigs: bigots make atheists, and atheists bigots? *Lys.* Granting this to be true. *Euph.* Will it not hence follow, that as we abhor slavish principles, we should avoid running into licentious ones? I am, and always was a sincere lover of liberty, legal English liberty; which I esteem a chief blessing, ornament, and comfort of life, and the great prerogative of an Englishman. But is it not to be feared, that upon the nation's running into a licentiousness which hath never been endured in any civilized country, men feeling the intolerable evils of one extreme may naturally fall into the other? You must allow, the bulk of mankind are not philosophers, like you and Alciphron. *Lys.* This I readily acknowledge. *Euph.* I have another scruple about the tendency of your opinions. Suppose you should prevail, and destroy this protestant church and clergy: how could you come at the popish? I am credibly informed there is a great number of emissaries of the church of Rome disguised in England: who can tell what harvest a clergy so numerous, so subtle, and so well furnished with arguments to work on vulgar and uneducated minds, may be able to make in a country despoiled of all religion and feeling the want of it? Who can tell whether the spirit of free-thinking ending with the opposition, and the vanity with the distinction, when the whole nation are alike infidels, who can tell, I say, whether in such a juncture the men of genius themselves may not affect a new distinction, and be the first converts to popery? *Lys.* And suppose they should. Between friends it would be no great matter. These are our maxims. In the first

place we hold it would be best to have no religion at all. Secondly, we hold that all religions are indifferent. If therefore upon trial we find the country cannot do without a religion, why not popery as well as another? I know several ingenious men of our sect, who, if we had a popish prince on the throne, would turn papists to-morrow. This is a paradox, but I shall explain it. A prince whom we compliment with our religion, to be sure must be grateful. *Euph.* I understand you. But what becomes of free-thinking all the while? *Lys.* Oh! we should have more than ever of that, for we should keep it all to ourselves. As for the amusement of retailing it, the want of this would be largely compensated by solid advantages of another kind. *Euph.* It seems then, by this account, the tendency you observed in the nation towards something great and new proves a tendency towards popery and slavery. *Lys.* Mistake us not, good Euphranor. The thing first in our intention is consummate liberty; but if this will not do, and there must after all be such things tolerated as religion and government, we are wisely willing to make the best of both. *Cri.* This puts me in mind of a thought I have often had, that the minute philosophers are dupes of the Jesuits. The two most avowed, professed, busy propagators of infidelity in all companies, and upon all occasions, that I ever met with, were both bigoted papists, and being both men of considerable estates, suffered considerably on that score; which it is wonderful their thinking disciples should never reflect upon. Hegemon, a most distinguished writer among the minute philosophers, and hero of the sect, I am well assured, was once a papist, and never heard that he professed any other religion. I know that many of the church of Rome abroad, are pleased with the growth of infidelity among us, as hoping it may make way for them. The emissaries of Rome are known to have personated several other sects, which from time to time have sprung up amongst us, and why not this of the minute philosophers, of all others the best calculated to ruin both church and state? I myself have known a Jesuit abroad talk among English gentlemen like a free-thinker. I am credibly informed, that Jesuits, known to be such by the minute philosophers at home, are admitted into their clubs: and I have observed them to approve, and speak better of the Jesuits, than of any other clergy whatsoever. Those who are not acquainted with the subtle spirit, the refined politics, and wonderful economy of that renowned society, need only read the account given of them by the Jesuit Inchofer, in his book *De Monarchia Solipsorum;* and those who are, will not be surprised they should be able to make dupes of our minute philosophers: dupes, I say, for I can never think they suspect they are only tools to serve the ends of cunninger men than themselves. They seem to me drunk and giddy with a false notion of liberty, and, spurred on

by this principle to make mad experiments on their country, they agree only in pulling down all that stands in their way; without any concerted scheme, and without caring or knowing what to erect in its stead. To hear them, as I have often done, descant on the moral virtues, resolve them into shame, then laugh at shame as a weakness, admire the unconfined lives of savages, despise all order and decency of education, one would think the intention of these philosophers was, when they had pruned and weeded the notions of their fellow-subjects, and divested them of their prejudices, to strip them of their clothes, and fill the country with naked followers of nature, enjoying all the privileges of brutality. Here Crito made a pause, and fixed his eyes on Alciphron, who during this whole conversation had sat thoughtful and attentive, without saying a word, and with an air, one while dissatisfied at what Lysicles advanced, another, serene and pleased, seeming to approve some better thought of his own. But the day being now far spent, Alciphron proposed to adjourn the argument to the following; when, said he, I shall set matters on a new foundation, and in so full and clear a light, as, I doubt not, will give entire satisfaction. So we changed the discourse, and after a repast upon cold provisions, took a walk on the strand, and in the cool of the evening returned to Crito's.

THE THIRD DIALOGUE.

I. Alciphron's account of honour. II. Character and conduct of men of honour. III. Sense of moral beauty. IV. The *honestum* or τὸ καλὸν of the ancients. V. Taste for moral beauty, whether a sure guide or rule. VI. Minute philosophers ravished with the abstract beauty of virtue. VII. Their virtue alone disinterested and heroic. VIII. Beauty of sensible objects, what, and how perceived. IX. The idea of beauty explained by painting and architecture. X. Beauty of the moral system, wherein it consists. XI. It supposeth a providence. XII. Influence of τὸ καλὸν and τὸ πρέπον. XIII. Enthusiasm of Cratylus compared with the sentiments of Aristotle. XIV. Compared with the Stoical principles. XV. Minute philosophers, their talent for raillery and ridicule. XVI. The wisdom of those who make virtue alone its own reward.

I. THE following day, as we sat round the tea-table, in a summer parlour which looks into the garden, Alciphron after the first dish turned down his cup, and reclining back in his chair proceeded as follows:—Above all the sects upon earth it is the peculiar privilege of ours, not to be tied down by any principles. While other philosophers profess a servile adherence to certain tenets, ours assert a noble freedom, differing not only one from another, but very often the same man from himself. Which method of proceeding, beside other advantages, hath this annexed to it, that we are of all men the hardest to confute. You may, perhaps, confute a particular tenet, but then this affects only

him who maintains it, and so long only as he maintains it. Some of our sect dogmatize more than others, and in some more than other points. The doctrine of the usefulness of vice is a point wherein we are not all agreed. Some of us are great admirers of virtue. With others the points of vice and virtue are problematical. For my own part, though I think the doctrine maintained yesterday by Lysicles an ingenious speculation; yet, upon the whole, there are divers reasons which incline me to depart from it, and rather to espouse the virtuous side of the question; with the smallest, perhaps, but the most contemplative and laudable part of our sect. It seemeth, I say, after a nice inquiry and balancing on both sides, that we ought to prefer virtue to vice; and that such preference would contribute both to the public weal, and the reputation of our philosophers. You are to know then, we have among us several that, without one grain of religion, are men of the nicest honour, and therefore men of virtue because men of honour. Honour is a noble, unpolluted source of virtue, without the least mixture of fear, interest, or superstition. It hath all the advantages without the evils which attend religion. It is the mark of a great and fine soul, and is to be found among persons of rank and breeding. It affects the court, the senate, and the camp, and in general every rendezvous of people of fashion. *Euph.* You say then that honour is the source of virtue. *Alc.* I do. *Euph.* Can a thing be the source of itself? *Alc.* It cannot. *Euph.* The source, therefore, is distinguished from that of which it is the source. *Alc.* Doubtless. *Euph.* Honour then is one thing and virtue another. *Alc.* I grant it. Virtuous actions are the effect, and honour is the source or cause of that effect. *Euph.* Tell me, is honour the will producing those actions, or the final cause for which they are produced, or right reason which is their rule and limit, or the object about which they are conversant? or do you by the word *honour* understand a faculty or appetite? All which are supposed, in one sense or other, to be the source of human actions. *Alc.* Nothing of all this. *Euph.* Be pleased then to give me some notion or definition of it. Alciphron having mused a while answered, that he defined honour to be a principle of virtuous actions. To which Euphranor replied: If I understand it rightly the word *principle* is variously taken. Sometimes by principles we mean the parts of which a whole is composed, and into which it may be resolved. Thus the elements are said to be principles of compound bodies. And thus words, syllables, and letters are the principles of speech. Sometimes by principle we mean a small particular seed, the growth or gradual unfolding of which doth produce an organized body, animal or vegetable, in its proper size and shape. Principles at other times are supposed to be certain fundamental theorems in arts and sciences, in religion and

politics. Let me know in which of these senses, or whether it be in some other sense that you understand this word, when you say, honour is a principle of virtue. To this Alciphron replied, that for his part he meant it in none of those senses, but defined honour to be a certain ardour or enthusiasm that glowed in the breast of a gallant man. Upon this, Euphranor observed, it was always admitted to put the definition in place of the thing defined. Is this allowed, said he, or not? *Alc.* It is. *Euph.* May we not therefore say, that a man of honour is a warm man, or an enthusiast? Alciphron hearing this, declared that such exactness was to no purpose; that pedants, indeed, may dispute and define, but could never reach that high sense of honour, which distinguished the fine gentleman, and was a thing rather to be felt than explained.

II. Crito perceiving that Alciphron could not bear being pressed any further on that article, and willing to give some satisfaction to Euphranor, said that of himself indeed he should not undertake to explain so nice a point, but he would retail to them part of a conversation he once heard between Nicander a minute philosopher, and Menecles a Christian, upon the same subject, which was for substance as follows:—*M.* From what principle are you gentlemen virtuous? *N.* From honour. We are men of honour. *M.* May not a man of honour debauch another's wife, or get drunk, or sell a vote, or refuse to pay his debts, without lessening or tainting his honour? *N.* He may have the vices and faults of a gentleman: but is obliged to pay debts of honour, that is, all such as are contracted by play. *M.* Is not your man of honour always ready to resent affronts and engage in duels? *N.* He is ready to demand and give gentleman's satisfaction upon all proper occasions. *M.* It should seem by this account, that to ruin tradesmen, break faith to one's own wife, corrupt another man's, take bribes, cheat the public, cut a man's throat for a word, are all points consistent with your principle of honour. *N.* It cannot be denied that we are men of gallantry, men of fire, men who know the world, and all that. *M.* It seems therefore that honour among infidels is like honesty among pirates: something confined to themselves, and which the fraternity perhaps may find their account in, but every one else should be constantly on his guard against. By this dialogue, continued Crito, a man who lives out of the *grand monde*, may be enabled to form some notion of what the world calls honour and men of honour. *Euph.* I must entreat you not to put me off with Nicander's opinion, whom I know nothing of, but rather give me your own judgment, drawn from your own observation upon men of honour. *Cri.* If I must pronounce, I can very sincerely assure you that by all I have heard or seen, I could never find, that honour, considered as a principle distinct from conscience,

religion, reason, and virtue, was more than an empty name. And I do verily believe, that those who build upon that notion have less virtue than other men, and that what they have or seem to have is owing to fashion (being of the reputable kind), if not to a conscience early imbued with religious principles, and afterwards retaining a tincture from them without knowing it. These two principles seem to account for all that looks like virtue in those gentlemen. Your men of fashion in whom animal life abounds, a sort of bullies in morality, who disdain to have it thought they are afraid of conscience; these descant much upon honour, and affect to be called men of honour, rather than conscientious or honest men. But, by all that I could ever observe, this specious character, where there is nothing of conscience or religion underneath, to give it life and substance, is no better than a meteor or painted cloud. *Euph.* I had a confused notion that honour was something nearly connected with truth, and that men of honour were the greatest enemies to all hypocrisy, fallacy, and disguise. *Cri.* So far from that, an infidel who sets up for the nicest honour shall, without the least grain of faith or religion, pretend himself a Christian, take any test, join in any act of worship, kneel, pray, receive the sacrament to serve an interest. The same person, without any impeachment of his honour, shall most solemnly declare and promise in the face of God and the world, that he will love his wife, and forsaking all others keep only to her, when at the same time it is certain, he intends never to perform one tittle of his vow; and convinceth the whole world of this as soon as he gets her in his power, and her fortune, for the sake of which this man of untainted honour makes no scruple to cheat and lie. *Euph.* We have a notion here in the country, that it was of all things most odious, and a matter of much risk and hazard, to give the lie to a man of honour. *Cri.* It is very true. He abhors to take the lie, but not to tell it.

III. Alciphron, having heard all this with great composure of mind and countenance, spake as follows. You are not to think that our greatest strength lies in our greatest number, libertines, and mere men of honour. No: we have among us philosophers of a very different character, men of curious contemplation, not governed by such gross things as sense and custom, but of an abstracted virtue and sublime morals: and the less religious the more virtuous. For virtue of the high and disinterested kind no man is so well qualified as an infidel, it being a mean and selfish thing to be virtuous through fear or hope. The notion of a Providence and future state of rewards and punishments, may indeed tempt or scare men of abject spirit into practices contrary to the natural bent of their souls, but will never produce a true and genuine virtue. To go to the bottom of things, to analyze virtue into its first principles, and fix a scheme of duty on its

true basis, you must understand that there is an idea of beauty natural to the mind of man. This all men desire, this they are pleased and delighted with for its own sake, purely from an instinct of nature. A man needs no arguments to make him discern and approve what is beautiful: it strikes at first sight, and attracts without a reason. And as this beauty is found in the shape and form of corporeal things, so also is there analogous to it a beauty of another kind, an order, a symmetry, and comeliness in the moral world. And as the eye perceiveth the one, so the mind doth by a certain interior sense perceive the other, which sense, talent, or faculty, is ever quickest and purest in the noblest minds. Thus as by sight I discern the beauty of a plant or an animal, even so the mind apprehends the moral excellence, the beauty, and decorum of justice and temperance. And as we readily pronounce a dress becoming, or an attitude graceful, we can, with the same free untutored judgment, at once declare, whether this or that conduct or action be comely and beautiful. To relish this kind of beauty, there must be a delicate and fine taste: but where there is this natural taste nothing further is wanting, either as a principle to convince, or as a motive to induce men to the love of virtue. And more or less there is of this taste or sense in every creature that hath reason. All rational beings are by nature social. They are drawn one towards another by natural affections: they unite and incorporate into families, clubs, parties, and commonwealths by mutual sympathy. As by means of the sensitive soul, our several distinct parts and members do consent towards the animal functions, and are connected in one whole: even so the several parts of these rational systems or bodies politic, by virtue of this moral or interior sense, are held together, have a fellow-feeling, do succour and protect each other, and jointly co-operate towards the same end. Hence that joy in society, that propension towards doing good to our kind, that gratulation and delight in beholding the virtuous deeds of other men, or in reflecting on our own. By contemplation of the fitness and order of the parts of a moral system, regularly operating, and knit together by benevolent affections, the mind of man attaineth to the highest notion of beauty, excellence, and perfection: seized and rapt with this sublime idea, our philosophers do infinitely despise and pity whoever shall propose or accept any other motive to virtue. Interest is a mean, ungenerous thing, destroying the merit of virtue, and falsehood of every kind is inconsistent with the genuine spirit of philosophy. *Cri.* The love therefore that you bear to moral beauty, and your passion for abstracted truth, will not suffer you to think with patience of those fraudulent impositions upon mankind, Providence, the immortality of the soul, and a future retribution of rewards and punishments; which, under the notion of

promoting, do, it seems, destroy all true virtue, and at the same time contradict and disparage your noble theories, manifestly tending to the perturbation and disquiet of men's minds, and filling them with fruitless hopes and vain terrors. *Alc.* Men's first thoughts and natural notions are the best in moral matters. And there is no need that mankind should be preached, or reasoned, or frightened into virtue, a thing so natural and congenial to every human soul. Now if this be the case, as it certainly is, it follows that all the ends of society are secured without religion, and that an infidel bids fair to be the most virtuous man, in a true, sublime, and heroic sense.

IV. *Euph.* O Alciphron, while you talk, I feel an affection in my soul like the trembling of one lute, upon striking the unison strings of another. Doubtless there is a beauty of the mind, a charm in virtue, a symmetry and proportion in the moral world. This moral beauty was known to the ancients by the name of *honestum* or τὸ καλὸν. And in order to know its force and influence, it may not be amiss to inquire what it was understood to be, and what light it was placed in by those who first considered it, and gave it a name: τὸ καλὸν, according to Aristotle, is the ἐπαινετὸν, or laudable; according to Plato it is the ἡδὺ, or ὠφέλιμον, pleasant or profitable, which is meant with respect to a reasonable mind and its true interest. Now I would fain know whether a mind, which considers an action as laudable, be not carried beyond the bare action itself, to regard the opinion of others concerning it? *Alc.* It is. *Euph.* And whether this be a sufficient ground or principle of virtue, for a man to act upon, when he thinks himself removed from the eye and observation of every other intelligent being? *Alc.* It seems not. *Euph.* Again, I ask whether a man who doth a thing pleasant or profitable, as such, might not be supposed to forbear doing it, or even to do the contrary, upon the prospect of greater pleasure or profit? *Alc.* He might. *Euph.* Doth it not follow from hence, that the beauty of virtue or τὸ καλὸν, in either Aristotle's or Plato's sense, is not a sufficient principle or ground to engage sensual and worldly-minded men in the practice of it? *Alc.* What then? *Euph.* Why then, it will follow that hope of reward and fear of punishment are highly expedient, to cast the balance of pleasant and profitable on the side of virtue, and thereby very much conduce to the benefit of human society. Alciphron, upon this, appealed; Gentlemen, said he, you are witnesses of this unfair proceeding of Euphranor, who argues against us, from explications given by Plato and Aristotle of the beauty of virtue, which are things we have nothing to say to; the philosophers of our sect abstracting from all praise, pleasure, and interest, when they are enamoured and transported with that sublime idea. I beg pardon, replied Euphranor, for supposing the minute

philosophers of our days think like those ancient sages. But you must tell me, Alciphron, since you do not think fit to adopt the sense of Plato or Aristotle, what sense it is in which you understand the beauty of virtue? Define it, explain it, make me to understand your meaning, that so we may argue about the same thing, without which we can never come to a conclusion.

V. *Alc.* Some things are better understood by definitions and descriptions, but I have always observed that those who would define, explain, and dispute about this point, make the least of it. Moral beauty is of so peculiar and abstracted a nature, something so subtile, fine, and fugacious, that it will not bear being handled and inspected, like every gross and common subject. You will, therefore, pardon me, if I stand upon my philosophic liberty; and choose rather to intrench myself within the general and indefinite sense, rather than by entering into a precise and particular explication of this beauty, perchance lose sight of it, or give you some hold whereon to cavil, and infer, and raise doubts, queries, and difficulties, about a point as clear as the sun, when nobody reasons upon it. *Euph.* How say you, Alciphron, is that notion clearest when it is not considered? *Alc.* I say it is rather to be felt than understood, a certain *je ne sais quoi.* An object, not of the discursive faculty, but of a peculiar sense, which is properly called the moral sense, being adapted to the perception of moral beauty, as the eye to colours, or the ear to sounds. *Euph.* That men have certain instinctive sensations or passions from nature, which make them amiable and useful to each other, I am clearly convinced. Such are a fellow-feeling with the distressed, a tenderness for our offspring, an affection towards our friends, our neighbours, and our country; an indignation against things base, cruel, or unjust. These passions are implanted in the human soul, with several other fears and appetites, aversions and desires, some of which are strongest and uppermost in one mind, others in another. Should it not, therefore, seem a very uncertain guide in morals, for a man to follow his passion or inward feeling? and would not this rule infallibly lead different men different ways, according to the prevalency of this or that appetite or passion? *Alc.* I do not deny it. *Euph.* And will it not follow from hence, that duty and virtue are in a fairer way of being practised, if men are led by reason and judgment, balancing low and sensual pleasures with those of a higher kind, comparing present losses with future gains, and the uneasiness and disgust of every vice with the delightful practice of the opposite virtue, and the pleasing reflections and hopes which attend it? Or can there be a stronger motive to virtue, than the showing that considered in all lights it is every man's true interest?

VI. *Alc.* I tell you, Euphranor, we contemn the virtue of

that man who computes and deliberates, and must have a reason for being virtuous. The refined moralists of our sect are ravished and transported with the abstract beauty of virtue. They disdain all forensical motives to it, and love virtue only for virtue's sake. Oh rapture! oh enthusiasm! oh the quintessence of beauty! methinks I could dwell for ever on this contemplation: but rather than entertain myself, I must endeavour to convince you. Make an experiment on the first man you meet. Propose a villanous or unjust action. Take his first sense of the matter, and you shall find he detests it. He may, indeed, be afterwards misled by arguments, or overpowered by temptation, but his original, unpremeditated, and genuine thoughts, are just and orthodox. How can we account for this but by a moral sense, which, left to itself, hath as quick and true a perception of the beauty and deformity of human actions, as the eye hath of colours? *Euph.* May not this be sufficiently accounted for by conscience, affection, passion, education, reason, custom, religion, which principles and habits, for aught I know, may be what you metaphorically call a moral sense. *Alc.* What I call a moral sense is strictly, properly, and truly such, and in kind different from all those things you enumerate. It is what all men have, though all may not observe it. Upon this Euphranor smiled, and said, Alciphron has made discoveries where I least expected it. For, said he, in regard to every other point, I should hope to learn from him, but for the knowledge of myself, or the faculties and powers of my own mind, I should have looked at home. And there I might have looked long enough, without finding this new talent, which even now, after being tutored, I cannot comprehend. For Alciphron, I must needs say, is too sublime and enigmatical upon a point which, of all others, ought to be most clearly understood. I have often heard that your deepest adepts and oldest professors in science are the obscurest. Lysicles is young and speaks plain. Would he but favour us with his sense of this point, it might perhaps prove more upon a level with my apprehension.

VII. Lysicles shook his head, and in a grave and earnest manner addressed the company. Gentlemen, said he, Alciphron stands upon his own legs. I have no part in these refined notions he is at present engaged to defend. If I must subdue my passions, abstract, contemplate, be enamoured of virtue; in a word, if I must be an enthusiast, I owe so much deference to the laws of my country, as to choose being an enthusiast in their way. Besides, it is better being so for some end than for none. This doctrine hath all the solid inconveniencies, without the amusing hopes and prospects of the Christian. *Alc.* I never counted on Lysicles for my second in this point; which after all doth not need his assistance or explication. All subjects ought not to be treated in the same manner. The way of definition

and division is dry and pedantic. Besides, the subject is sometimes too obscure, sometimes too simple for this method. One while we know too little of a point, another too much, to make it plainer by discourse. *Cri.* To hear Alciphron talk, puts me in mind of that ingenious Greek, who having wrapped a man's brother up in a cloak, asked him whether he knew that person? being ready, either by keeping on, or pulling off the cloak, to confute his answer whatever it should be. For my part I believe, if matters were fairly stated, that rational satisfaction, that peace of mind, that inward comfort, and conscientious joy, which a good Christian finds in good actions, would not be found to fall short of all the ecstasy, rapture, and enthusiasm supposed to be the effect of that high and undescribed principle. In earnest, can any ecstasy be higher, any rapture more affecting, than that which springs from the love of God and man, from a conscience void of offence, and an inward discharge of duty, with the secret delight, trust, and hope that attends it? *Alc.* O Euphranor, we votaries of truth do not envy, but pity, the groundless joys and mistaken hopes of a Christian. And, as for conscience and rational pleasure, how can we allow a conscience without allowing a vindictive Providence? Or how can we suppose the charm of virtue consists in any pleasure or benefit attending virtuous actions, without giving great advantages to the Christian religion, which, it seems, excites its believers to virtue by the highest interests and pleasures in reversion? Alas! should we grant this, there would be a door opened to all those rusty declaimers upon the necessity and usefulness of the great points of faith, the immortality of the soul, a future state, rewards and punishments, and the like exploded conceits; which, according to our system and princples, may perhaps produce a low, popular, interested kind of virtue, but must absolutely destroy and extinguish it in the sublime and heroic sense.

VIII. *Euph.* What you now say is very intelligible: I wish I understood your main principle as well. *Alc.* And are you then in earnest at a loss? Is it possible you should have no notion of beauty, or that having it you should not know it to be amiable, amiable I say in itself, and for itself? *Euph.* Pray tell me, Alciphron, are all mankind agreed in the notion of a beauteous face? *Alc.* Beauty in human kind seems to be of a more mixed and various nature; forasmuch as the passions, sentiments, and qualities of the soul being seen through and blending with the features, work differently on different minds, as the sympathy is more or less. But with regard to other things is there no steady principle of beauty? Is there upon earth a human mind without the idea of order, harmony, and proportion? *Euph.* O Alciphron, it is my weakness that I am apt to be lost and bewildered in abstractions and generalities, but a particular thing is better suited to my faculties. I find it easy to consider and keep

in view the objects of sense, let us therefore try to discover what their beauty is, or wherein it consists: and so, by the help of these sensible things, as a scale or ladder, ascend to moral and intellectual beauty. Be pleased then to inform me, what it is we call beauty in the objects of sense? *Alc.* Every one knows beauty is that which pleases. *Euph.* There is then beauty in the smell of a rose, or the taste of an apple. *Alc.* By no means. Beauty is, to speak properly, perceived only by the eye. *Euph.* It cannot therefore be defined in general that which pleaseth. *Alc.* I grant it cannot. *Euph.* How then shall we limit or define it? Alciphron, after a short pause, said, that beauty consisted in a certain symmetry or proportion pleasing to the eye. *Euph.* Is this proportion one and the same in all things, or is it different in different kinds of things? *Alc.* Different doubtless: the proportions of an ox would not be beautiful in a horse. And we may observe also in things inanimate, that the beauty of a table, a chair, a door, consists in different proportions. *Euph.* Doth not this proportion imply the relation of one thing to another? *Alc.* It doth. *Euph.* And are not these relations founded in size and shape? *Alc.* They are. *Euph.* And to make the proportions just, must not those mutual relations of size and shape in the parts be such, as shall make the whole complete and perfect in its kind? *Alc.* I grant they must. *Euph.* Is not a thing said to be perfect in its kind, when it answers the end for which it was made? *Alc.* It is. *Euph.* The parts, therefore, in true proportions must be so related and adjusted to one another, as that they may best conspire to the use and operation of the whole. *Alc.* It seems so. *Euph.* But the comparing parts one with another, the considering them as belonging to one whole, and the referring this whole to its use or end, should seem the work of reason: should it not? *Alc.* It should. *Euph.* Proportions therefore are not, strictly speaking, perceived by the sense of sight, but only by reason through the means of sight. *Alc.* This I grant. *Euph.* Consequently beauty, in your sense of it, is an object, not of the eye, but of the mind. *Alc.* It is. *Euph.* The eye, therefore, alone cannot see that a chair is handsome, or a door well proportioned. *Alc.* It seems to follow; but I am not clear as to this point. *Euph.* Let us see if there be any difficulty in it. Could the chair you sit on, think you, be reckoned well proportioned or handsome, if it had not such a height, breadth, wideness, and was not so far reclined as to afford a convenient seat? *Alc.* It could not. *Euph.* The beauty, therefore, or symmetry of a chair cannot be apprehended but by knowing its use, and comparing its figure with that use, which cannot be done by the eye alone, but is the effect of judgment. It is therefore one thing to see an object, and another to discern its beauty. *Alc.* I admit this to be true.

IX. *Euph.* The architects judge a door to be of a beautiful proportion, when its height is double of the breadth. But if you should invert a well-proportioned door, making its breadth become the height, and its height the breadth, the figure would still be the same, but without that beauty in one situation, which it had in another. What can be the cause of this, but that in the forementioned supposition, the door would not yield a convenient entrance to creatures of a human figure? But, if in any other part of the universe, there should be supposed rational animals of an inverted stature, they must be supposed to invert the rule for proportion of doors; and to them that would appear beautiful, which to us was disagreeable. *Alc.* Against this I have no objection. *Euph.* Tell me, Alciphron, is there not something truly decent and beautiful in dress? *Alc.* Doubtless there is. *Euph.* Are any likelier to give us an idea of this beauty in dress, than painters and sculptors, whose proper business and study it is, to aim at graceful representations? *Alc.* I believe not. *Euph.* Let us then examine the draperies of the great masters in these arts: how, for instance, they use to clothe a matron or a man of rank. Cast an eye on those figures (said he, pointing to some prints after Raphael and Guido, that hung upon the wall); what appearance, do you think, an English courtier or magistrate, with his Gothic, succinct, plaited garment, and his full-bottomed wig, or one of our ladies in her unnatural dress, pinched, and stiffened, and enlarged with hoops, and whale-bone, and buckram, must make, among those figures so decently clad in draperies that fall into such a variety of natural, easy, and ample folds, that appear with so much dignity and simplicity, that cover the body without encumbering it, and adorn without altering the shape? *Alc.* Truly I think they must make a very ridiculous appearance. *Euph.* And what do you think this proceeds from? Whence is it that the Eastern nations, the Greeks, and the Romans, naturally ran into the most becoming dresses, while our Gothic gentry, after so many centuries racking their inventions, mending, and altering, and improving, and whirling about in a perpetual rotation of fashions, have never yet had the luck to stumble on any that was not absurd and ridiculous? Is it not from hence, that instead of consulting use, reason, and convenience, they abandon themselves to irregular fancy, the unnatural parent of monsters? Whereas the ancients, considering the use and end of dress, made it subservient to the freedom, ease, and convenience of the body, and having no notion of mending or changing the natural shape, they aimed only at showing it with decency and advantage. And if this be so, are we not to conclude that the beauty of dress depends on its subserviency to certain ends and uses? *Alc.* This appears to be true. *Euph.* This subordinate relative nature of beauty perhaps will be yet

plainer, if we examine the respective beauties of a horse and a pillar. Virgil's description of the former is,

> ——— Illi ardua cervix,
> Argutumque caput, brevis alvus, obesaque terga,
> Luxuriatque toris animosum pectus.

Now I would fain know, whether the perfections and uses of a horse may not be reduced to these three points, courage, strength, and speed; and whether each of the beauties enumerated doth not occasion, or betoken, one of these perfections? After the same manner, if we inquire into the parts and proportions of a beautiful pillar, we shall perhaps find them answer to the same idea. Those who have considered the theory of architecture tell us,* the proportions of the three Grecian orders were taken from the human body, as the most beautiful and perfect production of nature. Hence were derived those graceful ideas of columns, which had a character of strength without clumsiness, or of delicacy without weakness. Those beautiful proportions were, I say, taken originally from nature, which, in her creatures, as hath been already observed, referreth them to some end, use, or design. The *gonfiezza* also, or swelling, and the diminution of a pillar, is it not in such proportion as to make it appear strong and light at the same time? In the same manner, must not the whole entablature, with its projections, be so proportioned, as to seem great but not heavy, light but not little, inasmuch as a deviation into either extreme would thwart that reason and use of things, wherein their beauty is founded, and to which it is subordinate? The entablature and all its parts and ornaments, architrave, frieze, cornice, triglyphs, metopes, modiglions, and the rest, have each a use or appearance of use, in giving firmness and union to the building, in protecting it from the weather, and casting off the rain, in representing the ends of beams with their intervals, the production of rafters, and so forth. And if we consider the graceful angles in frontispieces, the spaces between the columns, or the ornaments of their capitals, shall we not find, that their beauty riseth from the appearance of use, or the imitation of natural things, whose beauty is originally founded on the same principle? which is, indeed, the grand distinction between Grecian and Gothic architecture, the latter being fantastical, and for the most part founded neither in nature nor in reason, in necessity nor use, the appearance of which accounts for all the beauty, grace, and ornament of the other. *Cri.* What Euphranor has said confirms the opinion I always entertained, that the rules of architecture were founded, as all other arts which flourished among the Greeks, in truth, and nature, and good sense. But the ancients, who, from a thorough consideration of the

* See the learned Patriarch of Aquileia's Commentary on Vitruvius, lib. iv. c. 1.

grounds and principles of art, formed their idea of beauty, did not always confine themselves strictly to the same rules and proportions: but, whenever the particular distance, position, elevation, or dimension of the fabric or its parts seemed to require it, made no scruple to depart from them, without deserting the original principles of beauty, which governed whatever deviations they made. This latitude or license might not, perhaps, be safely trusted with most modern architects, who in their bold sallies seem to act without aim or design, and to be governed by no idea, no reason or principle of art, but pure caprice, joined with a thorough contempt of that noble simplicity of the ancients, without which there can be no unity, gracefulness, or grandeur in their works; which of consequence must serve only to disfigure and dishonour the nation, being so many monuments to future ages of the opulence and ill taste of the present; which, it is to be feared, would succeed as wretchedly, and make as mad work in other affairs, were men to follow, instead of rules, precepts, and models, their own taste and first thoughts of beauty. *Alc.* I should now, methinks, be glad to see a little more distinctly the use and tendency of this digression upon architecture. *Euph.* Was not beauty the very thing we inquired after? *Alc.* It was. *Euph.* What think you, Alciphron, can the appearance of a thing please at this time, and in this place, which pleased two thousand years ago, and two thousand miles off, without some real principle of beauty? *Alc.* It cannot. *Euph.* And is not this the case with respect to a just piece of architecture? *Alc.* Nobody denies it. *Euph.* Architecture, the noble offspring of judgment and fancy, was gradually formed in the most polite and knowing countries of Asia, Egypt, Greece, and Italy. It was cherished and esteemed by the most flourishing states, and most renowned princes, who, with vast expense, improved and brought it to perfection. It seems, above all other arts, peculiarly conversant about order, proportion, and symmetry. May it not therefore be supposed, on all accounts, most likely to help us to some rational notion of the *je ne sais quoi*, in beauty? And, in effect, have we not learned from this digression, that as there is no beauty without proportion, so proportions are to be esteemed just and true, only as they are relative to some certain use or end, their aptitude and subordination to which end is, at bottom, that which makes them please and charm? *Alc.* I admit all this to be true.

X. *Euph.* According to this doctrine, I would fain know what beauty can be found in a moral system, formed, connected, and governed by chance, fate, or any other blind, unthinking principle; forasmuch as without thought there can be no end or design, and without an end there can be no use, and without use there is no aptitude or fitness of proportion, from whence beauty

springs? *Alc.* May we not suppose a certain vital principle of beauty, order, and harmony, diffused throughout the world, without supposing a providence inspecting, punishing, and rewarding the moral actions of men; without supposing the immortality of the soul, or a life to come; in a word, without admitting any part of what is commonly called faith, worship, and religion? *Cri.* Either you suppose this principle intelligent or not intelligent: if the latter, it is all one with chance or fate, which was just now argued against: if the former, let me entreat Alciphron to explain to me wherein consists the beauty of a moral system, with a supreme intelligence at the head of it, which neither protects the innocent, punishes the wicked, nor rewards the virtuous? To suppose indeed a society of rational agents acting under the eye of Providence, concurring in one design to promote the common benefit of the whole, and conforming their actions to the established laws and order of the divine parental wisdom: wherein each particular agent shall not consider himself apart, but as the member of a great city, whose author and founder is God: in which the civil laws are no other than the rules of virtue and the duties of religion: and where every one's true interest is combined with his duty: to suppose this would be delightful: on this supposition a man need be no Stoic or knight-errant, to account for his virtue. In such a system vice is madness, cunning is folly, wisdom and virtue are the same thing, where, notwithstanding all the crooked paths and bye-roads, the wayward appetites and inclinations of men, sovereign reason is sure to reform whatever seems amiss, to reduce that which is devious, make straight that which is crooked, and in the last act wind up the whole plot according to the exactest rules of wisdom and justice. In such a system or society, governed by the wisest precepts, enforced by the highest rewards and discouragements, it is delightful to consider how the regulation of laws, the distribution of good and evil, the aim of moral agents, do all conspire in due subordination to promote the noblest end, to wit, the complete happiness or well-being of the whole. In contemplating the beauty of such a moral system we may cry out with the Psalmist, "Very excellent things are spoken of thee, thou city of God."

XI. In a system of spirits, subordinate to the will, and under the direction, of the Father of spirits, governing them by laws, and conducting them by methods, suitable to wise and good ends, there will be great beauty. But in an incoherent, fortuitous system governed by chance, or in a blind system governed by fate, or in any system where Providence doth not preside, how can beauty be, which cannot be without order, which cannot be without design? When a man is conscious that his will is inwardly conformed to the divine will, producing order and har-

mony in the universe, and conducting the whole by the justest methods to the best end: this gives a beautiful idea. But on the other hand, a consciousness of virtue overlooked, neglected, distressed by men, and not regarded or rewarded by God, ill-used in this world, without hope or prospect of being better used in another, I would fain know where is the pleasure of this reflection, where is the beauty of this scene? or how could any man, in his senses, think the spreading such notions the way to spread or propagate virtue in the world? Is it not, I beseech you, an ugly system in which you can suppose no law and prove no duty, wherein men thrive by wickedness, and suffer by virtue? Would it not be a disagreeable sight to see an honest man peeled by sharpers, to see virtuous men injured and despised while vice triumphed? An enthusiast may entertain himself with visions and fine talk about such a system; but when it comes to be considered by men of cool heads, and close reason, I believe they will find no beauty nor perfection in it; nor will it appear, that such a moral system can possibly come from the same hand, or be of a piece with the natural, throughout which there shines so much order, harmony, and proportion. *Alc.* Your discourse serves to confirm me in my opinion. You may remember, I declared that, touching this beauty of morality in the high sense, a man's first thoughts are best; and that, if we pretend to examine, and inspect, and reason, we are in danger to lose sight of it. That in fact there is such a thing cannot be doubted, when we consider that in these days some of our philosophers have a high sense of virtue, without the least notion of religion, a clear proof of the usefulness and efficacy of our principles!

XII. *Cri.* Not to dispute the virtue of minute philosophers, we may venture to call its cause in question, and make a doubt whether it be an inexplicable enthusiastic notion of moral beauty, or rather, as to me it seems, what was already assigned by Euphranor, complexion, custom, and religious education? But, allowing what beauty you please to virtue in an irreligious system, it cannot be less in a religious, unless you will suppose that her charms diminish as her dowry increaseth. The truth is, a believer hath all the motives from the beauty of virtue in any sense whatsoever that an unbeliever can possibly have, besides other motives which an unbeliever hath not. Hence it is plain, those of your sect, who have moral virtue, owe it not to their peculiar tenets, which serve only to lessen the motives to virtue. Those, therefore, who are good are less good, and those who are bad are more bad, than they would have been were they believers. *Euph.* To me it seems, those heroic infidel inamoratos of abstracted beauty are much to be pitied, and much to be admired. Lysicles, hearing this, said with some impatience, Gentlemen, you shall have my whole thoughts upon this point plain

and frank. All that is said about a moral sense, or moral beauty, in any signification, either of Alciphron or Euphranor, or any other, I take to be at bottom mere bubble and pretence. The καλὸν and the πρέπον, the beautiful and decent, are things outward, relative, and superficial, which have no effect in the dark, but are specious topics to discourse and expatiate upon, as some formal pretenders of our sect, though in other points very orthodox, are used to do. But should one of them get into power, you would find him no such fool as Euphranor imagines. He would soon show he had found out, that the love of one's country is a prejudice: that mankind are rogues and hypocrites, and that it were folly to sacrifice one's self for the sake of such: that all regards centre in this life, and that, as this life is to every man his own life, it clearly follows that charity begins at home. Benevolence to mankind is perhaps pretended, but benevolence to himself is practised by the wise. The livelier sort of our philosophers do not scruple to own these maxims; and as for the graver, if they are true to their principles, one may guess what they must think at the bottom. *Cri.* Whatever may be the effect of pure theory upon certain select spirits of a peculiar make, or in some other parts of the world, I do verily think that in this country of ours, reason, religion, law, are all together little enough to subdue the outward to the inner man; and that it must argue a wrong head and weak judgment to suppose, that without them men will be enamoured of the golden mean. To which my countrymen, perhaps, are less inclined than others, there being in the make of an English mind a certain gloom and eagerness, which carries to the sad extreme; religion to fanaticism; free-thinking to atheism; liberty to rebellion: nor should we venture to be governed by taste, even in matters of less consequence. The beautiful in dress, furniture, and building, is, as Euphranor hath observed, something real and well-grounded: and yet our English do not find it out of themselves. What wretched work do they and other northern people make, when they follow their own taste of beauty in any of these particulars, instead of acquiring the true, which is to be got from ancient models and the principles of art, as in the case of virtue from great models and meditation, so far as natural means can go. But in no case is it to be hoped, that τὸ καλὸν will be the leading idea of the many, who have quick senses, strong passions, and gross intellects.

XIII. *Alc.* The fewer they are the more ought we to esteem and admire such philosophers, whose souls are touched and transported with this sublime idea. *Cri.* But then one might expect from such philosophers so much good sense and philanthropy as to keep their tenets to themselves, and consider their weak brethren, who are more strongly affected by certain senses and

notions of another kind, than that of the beauty of pure, disinterested virtue. Cratylus, a man prejudiced against the Christian religion, of a crazy constitution, of a rank above most men's ambition, and a fortune equal to his rank, had little capacity for sensual vices, or temptation to dishonest ones. Cratylus having talked himself, or imagined that he had talked himself, into a Stoical enthusiasm about the beauty of virtue, did, under the pretence of making men heroically virtuous, endeavour to destroy the means of making them reasonably and humanly so: a clear instance, that neither birth, nor books, nor conversation, can introduce a knowledge of the world into a conceited mind, which will ever be its own object, and contemplate mankind in its own mirror! *Alc.* Cratylus was a lover of liberty, and of his country, and had a mind to make men incorrupt and virtuous, upon the purest and most disinterested principles. *Cri.* His conduct seems just as wise as if a monarch should give out that there was neither jail nor executioner in his kingdom to enforce the laws, but that it would be beautiful to observe them, and that in so doing men would taste the pure delight which results from order and decorum. *Alc.* After all, is it not true that certain ancient philosophers of great note held the same opinion with Cratylus, declaring that he did not come up to the character, or deserve the title of a good man, who practised virtue for the sake of any thing but its own beauty? *Cri.* I believe, indeed, that some of the ancients said such things as gave occasion for this opinion. Aristotle* distinguisheth between two characters of a good man, the one he calleth ἀγαθὸς, or simply good, the other καλὸς κἀγαθὸς, from whence the compound term καλοκἀγαθία, which cannot, perhaps, be rendered by any one word in our language. But his sense is plainly this: ἀγαθὸς he defineth to be that man to whom the good things of nature are good; for, according to him, those things which are vulgarly esteemed the greatest goods, as riches, honours, power, and bodily perfections, are indeed good by nature, but they happen, nevertheless, to be hurtful and bad to some persons, upon the account of evil habits: inasmuch as neither a fool, nor an unjust man, nor an intemperate, can be at all the better for the use of them, any more than a sick man for using the nourishment proper for those who are in health. But καλὸς κἀγαθὸς is that man in whom are to be found all things worthy and decent and laudable, purely as such, and for their own sake, and who practiseth virtue from no other motive but the sole love of her own innate beauty. That philosopher observes likewise, that there is a certain political habit, such as the Spartans and others had, who thought virtue was to be valued and practised on account of the natural advantages that attend it. For which reason he adds, they are indeed good

* Ethic. ad Eudemum, lib. vii. cap. ult.

men, but they have not the καλοκἀγαθία, or supreme, consummate virtue. From hence it is plain, that, according to Aristotle, a man may be a good man without believing virtue its own reward, or being only moved to virtue by the sense of moral beauty. It is also plain, that he distinguisheth the political virtues of nations, which the public is every where concerned to maintain, from this sublime and speculative kind. It might also be observed, that his exalted idea did consist with supposing a providence which inspects and rewards the virtues of the best men. For, saith he, in another place,* if the gods have any care of human affairs, as it appears they have, it should seem reasonable to suppose, they are most delighted with the most excellent nature, and most approaching their own, which is the mind, and that they will reward those who chiefly love and cultivate what is most dear to them. The same philosopher observes,† that the bulk of mankind are not naturally disposed to be awed by shame, but by fear; nor to abstain from vicious practices, on account of their deformity, but only of the punishment which attends them. And again,‡ he tells us that youth, being of itself averse from abstinence and sobriety, should be under the restraint of laws, regulating their education and employment, and that the same discipline should be continued even after they became men. For which, saith he, we want laws, and, in one word, for the whole ordering of life, inasmuch as the generality of mankind obey rather force than reason, and are influenced rather by penalties than the beauty of virtue; ζημίαις ἢ τῶ καλῷ. From all which it is very plain, what Aristotle would have thought of those, who should go about to lessen or destroy the hopes and fears of mankind, in order to make them virtuous on this sole principle of the beauty of virtue.

XIV. *Alc.* But, whatever the Stagirite and his Peripatetics might think, is it not certain that the Stoics maintained this doctrine in its highest sense, asserting the beauty of virtue to be all-sufficient, that virtue was her own reward, that this alone could make a man happy, in spite of all those things which are vulgarly esteemed the greatest woes and miseries of human life? And all this they held at the same time that they believed the soul of man to be of a corporeal nature, and in death dissipated like a flame or vapour. *Cri.* It must be owned, the Stoics sometimes talk as if they believed the mortality of the soul. Seneca, in a letter of his to Lucilius, speaks much like a minute philosopher in this particular. But in several other places he declares himself of a clear contrary opinion, affirming that the souls of men after death mount aloft into the heavens, look down upon earth, entertain themselves with the theory of celestial bodies,

* Ad Nicom. lib. x. c. 8. † Ibid. c. 9. ‡ Ibid.

the course of nature, and the conversation of wise and excellent men, who, having lived in distant ages and countries upon earth, make one society in the other world. It must also be acknowledged, that Marcus Antoninus sometimes speaks of the soul as perishing, or dissolving into its elementary parts: but it is to be noted, that he distinguisheth three principles in the composition of human nature, the σῶμα, ψυχὴ, νοῦς,* body, soul, mind, or as he otherwise expresseth himself, σαρκία, πνευμάτιον, and ἡγεμονικὸν, flesh, spirit, and governing principle. What he calls the ψυχὴ, or soul, containing the brutal part of our nature, is, indeed, represented as a compound dissoluble, and actually dissolved by death: but the νοῦς or τὸ ἡγεμονικὸν, the mind or ruling principle, he held to be of a pure celestial nature, Θεοῦ ἀπόσπασμα, a particle of God, which he sends back entire to the stars and the divinity. Besides, among all his magnificent lessons and splendid sentiments, upon the force and beauty of virtue, he is positive as to the being of God, and that not merely as a plastic nature, or soul of the world, but in the strict sense of a providence, inspecting and taking care of human affairs.† The Stoics, therefore, though their style was high, and often above truth and nature, yet it cannot be said that they so resolved every motive to a virtuous life into the sole beauty of virtue, as to endeavour to destroy the belief of the immortality of the soul and a distributive providence. After all, allowing the disinterested Stoics (therein not unlike our modern quietists) to have made virtue its own sole reward, in the most rigid and absolute sense, yet what is this to those who are no Stoics? If we adopt the whole principles of that sect, admitting their notions of good and evil, their celebrated apathy, and, in one word, setting up for complete Stoics, we may possibly maintain this doctrine with a better grace; at least it will be of a piece and consistent with the whole. But he who shall borrow this splendid patch from the Stoics, and hope to make a figure by inserting it into a piece of modern composition, seasoned with the wit and notions of these times, will indeed make a figure, but perhaps it may not be in the eyes of a wise man the figure he intended.

XV. Though it must be owned, the present age is very indulgent to every thing that aims at profane raillery; which is alone sufficient to recommend any fantastical composition to the public. You may behold the tinsel of a modern author pass upon this knowing and learned age for good writing; affected strains for wit; pedantry for politeness; obscurity for depths; ramblings for flights; the most awkward imitation for original humour; and all this upon the sole merit of a little artful profaneness. *Alc.* Every one is not alike pleased with writings of

* Lib. iii. c. 16. † Marc. Antonin. lib. ii. § 11.

humour, nor alike capable of them. It is the fine irony of a man of quality, "that certain reverend authors, who can condescend to lay-wit, are nicely qualified to hit the air of breeding and gentility, and that they will, in time, no doubt, refine their manner to the edification of the polite world; who have been so long seduced by the way of raillery and wit." The truth is, the various taste of readers requireth various kinds of writers. Our sect hath provided for this with great judgment. To proselyte the graver sort we have certain profound men at reason and argument. For the coffee-houses and populace, we have declaimers of a copious vein. Of such a writer it is no reproach to say, *fluit lutulentus;* he is the fitter for his readers. Then, for men of rank and politeness we have the finest and wittiest *railleurs* in the world, whose ridicule is the surest test of truth. *Euph.* Tell me, Alciphron, are those ingenious *railleurs* men of knowledge? *Alc.* Very knowing. *Euph.* Do they know for instance the Copernican system, or the circulation of the blood? *Alc.* One would think you judged of our sect by your country neighbours: there is nobody in town but knows all those points. *Euph.* You believe then antipodes, mountains in the moon, and the motion of the earth. *Alc.* We do. *Euph.* Suppose, five or six centuries ago, a man had maintained these notions among the *beaux esprits* of an English court; how do you think they would have been received? *Alc.* With great ridicule. *Euph.* And now it would be ridiculous to ridicule them. *Alc.* It would. *Euph.* But truth was the same then and now. *Alc.* It was. *Euph.* It should seem, therefore, that ridicule is no such sovereign touchstone and test of truth as you gentlemen imagine. *Alc.* One thing we know: our raillery and sarcasms gall the black tribe, and that is our comfort. *Cri.* There is another thing it may be worth your while to know: that men in a laughing fit may applaud a ridicule, which shall appear contemptible when they come to themselves; witness the ridicule of Socrates by the comic poet, the humour and reception it met with no more proving that, than the same will yours, to be just, when calmly considered by men of sense. *Alc.* After all, thus much is certain, our ingenious men make converts by deriding the principles of religion. And, take my word, it is the most successful and pleasing method of conviction. These authors laugh men out of their religion, as Horace did out of their vices; *admissi circum præcordia ludunt.* But a bigot cannot relish or find out their wit.

XVI. *Cri.* Wit without wisdom, if there be such a thing, is hardly worth finding. And as for the wisdom of these men, it is of a kind so peculiar, one may well suspect it. Cicero was a man of sense, and no bigot, nevertheless he makes Scipio own himself much more vigilant and vigorous in the race of virtue, from supposing heaven the prize.* And he introduceth Cato,

* Somn. Scipionis.

declaring, he would never have undergone those virtuous toils for the service of the public, if he had thought his being was to end with this life.* *Alc.* I acknowledge Cato, Scipio, and Cicero were very well for their times, but you must pardon me, if I do not think they arrived at the high, consummate virtue of our modern free-thinkers. *Euph.* It should seem then that virtue flourisheth more than ever among us. *Alc.* It should. *Euph.* And this abundant virtue is owing to the method taken by your profound writers to recommend it. *Alc.* This I grant. *Euph.* But you have acknowledged, that the enthusiastic lovers of virtue are not the many of your sect, but only a few select spirits. To which Alciphron making no answer, Crito addressed himself to Euphranor: To make, said he, a true estimate of the worth and growth of modern virtue, you are not to count the virtuous men, but rather to consider the quality of their virtue. Now you must know, the virtue of these refined theorists is something so pure and genuine, that a very little goes far, and is in truth invaluable. To which that reasonable interested virtue, of the old English or Spartan kind, can bear no proportion. *Euph.* Tell me, Alciphron, are there not diseases of the soul, as well as of the body? *Alc.* Without doubt. *Euph.* And are not those diseases vicious habits? *Alc.* They are. *Euph.* And, as bodily distempers are cured by physic, those of the mind are cured by philosophy; are they not? *Alc.* I acknowledge it. *Euph.* It seems, therefore, that philosophy is a medicine for the soul of man. *Alc.* It is. *Euph.* How shall we be able to judge of medicines, or know which to prefer? Is it not from the effects wrought by them? *Alc.* Doubtless. *Euph.* Where an epidemical distemper rages, suppose a new physician should condemn the known established practice, and recommend another method of cure, would you not, in proportion as the bills of mortality increased, be tempted to suspect this new method, notwithstanding all the plausible discourse of its abettors? *Alc.* This serves only to amuse and lead us from the question. *Cri.* It puts me in mind of my friend Lamprocles, who needed but one argument against infidels. I observed, said he, that, as infidelity grew, there grew corruption of every kind, and new vices. This simple observation on matter of fact was sufficient to make him, notwithstanding the remonstrance of several ingenious men, imbue and season the minds of his children betimes with the principles of religion. The new theories, which our acute moderns have endeavoured to substitute in place of religion, have had their full course in the present age, and produced their effect on the minds and manners of men. That men are men is a sure maxim: but it is as sure that Englishmen are not the same men they were; whether better or worse, more or less virtuous, I need not say. Every one may

* De Senectute.

see and judge. Though, indeed, after Aristides had been banished, and Socrates put to death at Athens, a man, without being a conjurer, might guess what the beauty of virtue could do in England. But there is now neither room nor occasion for guessing. We have our own experience to open our eyes; which yet if we continue to keep shut, till the remains of religious education are quite worn off from the minds of men, it is to be feared we shall then open them wide, not to avoid, but to behold and lament our ruin. *Alc.* Be the consequences what they will, I can never bring myself to be of a mind with those who measure truth by convenience. Truth is the only divinity that I adore. Wherever truth leads I shall follow. *Euph.* You have then a passion for truth? *Alc.* Undoubtedly. *Euph.* For all truths? *Alc.* For all. *Euph.* To know or to publish them? *Alc.* Both. *Euph.* What! would you undeceive a child that was taking physic? Would you officiously set an enemy right, that was making a wrong attack? Would you help an enraged man to his sword? *Alc.* In such cases, common sense directs one how to behave. *Euph.* Common sense, it seems then, must be consulted whether a truth be salutary or hurtful, fit to be declared or concealed. *Alc.* How! you would have me conceal and stifle the truth, and keep it to myself? Is this what you aim at? *Euph.* I only make a plain inference from what you grant. As for myself, I do not believe your opinions true. And although you do, you should not therefore, if you would appear consistent with yourself, think it necessary or wise to publish hurtful truths. What service can it do mankind to lessen the motives to virtue, or what damage to increase them? *Alc.* None in the world. But I must needs say, I cannot reconcile the received notions of a God and Providence to my understanding, and my nature abhors the baseness of conniving at a falsehood. *Euph.* Shall we therefore appeal to truth, and examine the reasons by which you are withheld from believing these points? *Alc.* With all my heart, but enough for the present. We will make this the subject of our next conference.

THE FOURTH DIALOGUE.

I. Prejudices concerning a Deity. II. Rules laid down by Alciphron to be observed in proving a God. III. What sort of proof he expects. IV. Whence we collect the being of other thinking individuals. V. The same method *à fortiori* proves the being of God. VI. Alciphron's second thoughts on this point. VII. God speaks to men. VIII. How distance is perceived by sight. IX. The proper objects of sight at no distance. X. Lights, shades, and colours, variously combined, form a language. XI. The signification of this language learned by experience. XII. God explaineth himself to the eyes of men by the arbitrary use of sensible signs. XIII. The prejudice and twofold aspect of a minute philosopher. XIV. God present to mankind, informs, admonishes, and directs them in a sensible manner. XV. Admirable nature and use of this visual language. XVI. Minute philosophers content to admit a God in certain senses. XVII. Opinion of some who hold that knowledge and wisdom are not properly in God. XVIII. Dangerous tendency of this notion. XIX. Its original. XX. The sense of schoolmen upon it. XXI. Scholastic use of the terms *analogy* and *analogical* explained: analogical perfections of God misunderstood. XXII. God intelligent, wise, and good in the proper sense of the words. XXIII. Objection from moral evil considered. XXIV. Men argue from their own defects against a Deity. XXV. Religious worship reasonable and expedient.

I. EARLY the next morning, as I looked out of my window, I saw Alciphron walking in the garden with all the signs of a man in deep thought. Upon which I went down to him. Alciphron, said I, this early and profound meditation puts me in no small fright. How so? Because I should be sorry to be convinced there was no God. The thought of anarchy in nature is to me more shocking than in civil life; inasmuch as natural concerns are more important than civil, and the basis of all others. I grant, replied Alciphron, that some inconvenience may possibly follow from disproving a God; but as to what you say of fright and shocking, all that is nothing but mere prejudice. Men frame an idea or chimera in their own minds, and then fall down and worship it. Notions govern mankind; but of all notions, that of God's governing the world hath taken the deepest root and spread the furthest: it is therefore in philosophy an heroical achievement to dispossess this imaginary monarch of his government, and banish all those fears and spectres which the light of reason alone can dispel.

> Non radii solis, non lucida tela diei
> Discutiunt, sed naturæ species ratioque.*

My part, said I, shall be to stand by, as I have hitherto done, and take notes of all that passeth during this memorable event, while a minute philosopher not six foot high attempts to dethrone the monarch of the universe. Alas! replied Alciphron, arguments are not to be measured by feet and inches. One man may see more than a million; and a short argument, managed by a free-

* Lucretius.

thinker, may be sufficient to overthrow the most gigantic chimera. As we were engaged in this discourse, Crito and Euphranor joined us. I find you have been beforehand with us to-day, said Crito to Alciphron, and taken the advantage of solitude and early hours, while Euphranor and I were asleep in our beds. We may therefore expect to see atheism placed in the best light, and supported by the strongest arguments.

II. *Alc.* The being of a God is a subject upon which there has been a world of common-place, which it is needless to repeat. Give me leave therefore to lay down certain rules and limitations, in order to shorten our present conference. For as the end of debating is to persuade, all those things which are foreign to this end should be left out of our debate. First then, let me tell you, I am not to be persuaded by metaphysical arguments; such, for instance, as are drawn from the idea of an all-perfect being, or the absurdity of an infinite progression of causes. This sort of arguments I have always found dry and jejune; and, as they are not suited to my way of thinking, they may perhaps puzzle but never will convince me. Secondly, I am not to be persuaded by the authority either of past or present ages, of mankind in general, or of particular wise men, all which passeth for little or nothing with a man of sound argument and free thought. Thirdly, all proofs drawn from utility or convenience are foreign to the purpose. They may prove indeed the usefulness of the notion, but not the existence of the thing. Whatever legislators or statesmen may think, truth and convenience are very different things to the rigorous eyes of a philosopher. And now, that I may not seem partial, I will limit myself also not to object, in the first place, from any thing that may seem irregular or unaccountable in the works of nature, against a cause of infinite power and wisdom; because I already know the answer you would make, to wit, that no one can judge of the symmetry and use of the parts of an infinite machine, which are all relative to each other, and to the whole, without being able to comprehend the entire machine or the whole universe. And in the second place, I shall engage myself not to object against the justice and providence of a supreme being, from the evil that befalls good men, and the prosperity which is often the portion of wicked men in this life; because I know that, instead of admitting this to be an objection against a Deity, you would make it an argument for a future state, in which there shall be such a retribution of rewards and punishments, as may vindicate the divine attributes, and set all things right in the end. Now these answers, though they should be admitted for good ones, are in truth no proofs of the being of God, but only solutions of certain difficulties which might be objected, supposing it already proved by proper arguments. Thus much I thought fit to premise, in order to save

time and trouble both to you and myself. *Cri.* I think that, as the proper end of our conference ought to be supposed the discovery and defence of truth, so truth may be justified, not only by persuading its adversaries, but, where that cannot be done, by showing them to be unreasonable. Arguments therefore, which carry light, have their effect, even against an opponent who shuts his eyes, because they show him to be obstinate and prejudiced. Besides, this distinction between arguments that puzzle and that convince, is least of all observed by minute philosophers, and need not therefore be observed by others in their favour. But perhaps Euphranor may be willing to encounter you on your own terms, in which case I have nothing further to say.

III. *Euph.* Alciphron acts like a skilful general, who is bent upon gaining the advantage of the ground, and alluring the enemy out of their trenches. We, who believe a God, are intrenched within tradition, custom, authority, and law. And nevertheless, instead of attempting to force us, he proposes that we should voluntarily abandon these intrenchments, and make the attack, when we may act on the defensive with much security and ease, leaving him the trouble to dispossess us of what we need not resign. Those reasons (continued he, addressing himself to Alciphron) which you have mustered up in this morning's meditation, if they do not weaken, must establish our belief of a God; for the utmost is to be expected from so great a master in his profession, when he sets his strength to a point. *Alc.* I hold the confused notion of a Deity, or some invisible power, to be of all prejudices the most unconquerable. When half a dozen ingenious men are got together over a glass of wine, by a cheerful fire, in a room well lighted, we banish with ease all the spectres of fancy or education, and are very clear in our decisions. But, as I was taking a solitary walk before it was broad day-light in yonder grove, methought the point was not quite so clear; nor could I readily recollect the force of those arguments, which used to appear so conclusive at other times. I had I know not what awe upon my mind, and seemed haunted by a sort of panic, which I cannot otherwise account for, than by supposing it the effect of prejudice: for you must know, that I, like the rest of the world, was once upon a time catechised and tutored into the belief of a God or Spirit. There is no surer mark of prejudice, than the believing a thing without reason. What necessity then can there be that I should set myself the difficult task of proving a negative, when it is sufficient to observe that there is no proof of the affirmative, and that the admitting it without proof is unreasonable? Prove therefore your opinion; or, if you cannot, you may indeed remain in possession of it, but you will only be possessed of a prejudice. *Euph.* O Alciphron, to content you we must prove, it seems, and we must prove upon your own

terms. But, in the first place, let us see what sort of proof you expect. *Alc.* Perhaps I may not expect it, but I will tell you what sort of proof I would have: and that is in short, such proof as every man of sense requires of a matter of fact, or the existence of any other particular thing. For instance, should a man ask why I believe there is a king of Great Britain? I might answer, because I had seen him; or a king of Spain? because I had seen those who saw him. But as for this King of kings, I neither saw him myself, nor any one else that did ever see him. Surely if there be such a thing as God, it is very strange that he should leave himself without a witness; that men should still dispute his being; and that there should be no one evident, sensible, plain proof of it, without recourse to philosophy or metaphysics. A matter of fact is not to be proved by notions, but by facts. This is clear and full to the point. You see what I would be at. Upon these principles I defy superstition. *Euph.* You believe then as far as you can see. *Alc.* That is my rule of faith. *Euph.* How! will you not believe the existence of things which you hear, unless you also see them? *Alc.* I will not say so neither. When I insisted on seeing, I would be understood to mean perceiving in general: outward objects make very different impressions upon the animal spirits, all which are comprised under the common name of sense. And whatever we can perceive by any sense, we may be sure of.

IV. *Euph.* What! do you believe then there are such things as animal spirits? *Alc.* Doubtless. *Euph.* By what sense do you perceive them? *Alc.* I do not perceive them immediately by any of my senses. I am nevertheless persuaded of their existence, because I can collect it from their effects and operations. They are the messengers, which, running to and fro in the nerves, preserve a communication between the soul and outward objects. *Euph.* You admit then the being of a soul. *Alc.* Provided I do not admit an immaterial substance, I see no inconvenience in admitting there may be such a thing as a soul. And this may be no more than a thin, fine texture of subtle parts or spirits residing in the brain. *Euph.* I do not ask about its nature. I only ask whether you admit that there is a principle of thought and action, and whether it be perceivable by sense. *Alc.* I grant that there is such a principle, and that it is not the object of sense itself, but inferred from appearances which are perceived by sense. *Euph.* If I understand you rightly, from animal functions and motions you infer the existence of animal spirits, and from reasonable acts you infer the existence of a reasonable soul. Is it not so? *Alc.* It is. *Euph.* It should seem therefore, that the being of things imperceptible to sense may be collected from effects and signs, or sensible tokens. *Alc.* It may. *Euph.* Tell me, Alciphron, is not the

soul that which makes the principal distinction between a real person and a shadow, a living man and a carcass? *Alc.* I grant it is. *Euph.* I cannot, therefore, know that you for instance are a distinct thinking individual, or a living real man, by surer or other signs than those from which it can be inferred that you have a soul. *Alc.* You cannot. *Euph.* Pray tell me, are not all acts immediately and properly perceived by sense reducible to motion? *Alc.* They are. *Euph.* From motions therefore you infer a mover or cause; and from reasonable motions (or such as appear calculated for a reasonable end) a rational cause, soul, or spirit. *Alc.* Even so.

V. *Euph.* The soul of man actuates but a small body, an insignificant particle, in respect of the great masses of nature, the elements, and heavenly bodies, and system of the world. And the wisdom that appears in those motions, which are the effect of human reason, is incomparably less than that which discovers itself in the structure and use of organized natural bodies, animal or vegetable. A man with his hand can make no machine so admirable as the hand itself: nor can any of those motions, by which we trace out human reason, approach the skill and contrivance of those wonderful motions of the heart, and brain, and other vital parts, which do not depend on the will of man. *Alc.* All this is true. *Euph.* Doth it not follow then that from natural motions, independent of man's will, may be inferred both power and wisdom incomparably greater than that of the human soul? *Alc.* It should seem so. *Euph.* Further, is there not in natural productions and effects a visible unity of counsel and design? Are not the rules fixed and immoveable? Do not the same laws of motion obtain throughout? The same in China and here, the same two thousand years ago and at this day? *Alc.* All this I do not deny. *Euph.* Is there not also a connexion or relation between animals and vegetables, beween both and the elements, between the elements and heavenly bodies; so that from their mutual respects, influences, subordinations, and uses, they may be collected to be parts of one whole, conspiring to one and the same end, and fulfilling the same design? *Alc.* Supposing all this to be true. *Euph.* Will it not then follow, that this vastly great or infinite power and wisdom must be supposed in one and the same agent, spirit, or mind; and that we have, at least, as clear, full, and immediate certainty of the being of this infinitely wise and powerful spirit, as of any one human soul whatsoever besides our own? *Alc.* Let me consider; I suspect we proceed too hastily. What! do you pretend you can have the same assurance of the being of a God, that you can have of mine, whom you actually see stand before you and talk to you? *Euph.* The very same, if not greater. *Alc.* How do you make this appear? *Euph.* By the person Alciphron is

meant an individual thinking thing, and not the hair, skin, or visible surface, or any part of the outward form, colour, or shape of Alciphron. *Alc.* This I grant. *Euph.* And in granting this, you grant that, in a strict sense, I do not see Alciphron, i. e. that individual thinking thing, but only such visible signs and tokens, as suggest and infer the being of that invisible thinking principle or soul. Even so, in the selfsame manner, it seems to me, that though I cannot with eyes of flesh behold the invisible God, yet I do in the strictest sense behold and perceive by all my senses such signs and tokens, such effects and operations, as suggest, indicate, and demonstrate an invisible God, as certainly and with the same evidence, at least, as any other signs, perceived by sense, do suggest to me the existence of your soul, spirit, or thinking principle; which I am convinced of only by a few signs or effects, and the motions of one small organized body: whereas I do, at all times and in all places, perceive sensible signs, which evince the being of God. The point, therefore, doubted, or denied by you at the beginning, now seems manifestly to follow from the premises. Throughout this whole inquiry, have we not considered every step with care, and made not the least advance without clear evidence? You and I examined and assented singly to each foregoing proposition: what shall we do then with the conclusion? For my part, if you do not help me out, I find myself under an absolute necessity of admitting it for true. You must therefore be content henceforward to bear the blame, if I live and die in the belief of a God.

VI. *Alc.* It must be confessed, I do not readily find an answer. There seems to be some foundation for what you say. But on the other hand, if the point was so clear as you pretend, I cannot conceive how so many sagacious men of our sect should be so much in the dark, as not to know or believe one syllable of it. *Euph.* O Alciphron! it is not our present business to account for the oversights, or vindicate the honour of those great men the free-thinkers, when their very existence is in danger of being called in question. *Alc.* How so? *Euph.* Be pleased to recollect the concessions you have made, and then show me, if the arguments for a Deity be not conclusive, by what better argument you can prove the existence of that thinking thing, which in strictness constitutes the free-thinker. As soon as Euphranor had uttered these words, Alciphron stopped short, and stood in a posture of meditation, while the rest of us continued our walk, and took two or three turns; after which he joined us again with a smiling countenance, like one who had made some discovery. I have found, said he, what may clear up the point in dispute, and give Euphranor entire satisfaction; I would say an argument which will prove the existence of a free-thinker, the like whereof

cannot be applied to prove the existence of a God. You must know then, that your notion of our perceiving the existence of God, as certainly and immediately as we do that of a human person, I could by no means digest, though I must own it puzzled me, till I had considered the matter. At first methought, a particular structure, shape, or motion was the most certain proof of a thinking, reasonable soul. But a little attention satisfied me, that these things have no necessary connexion with reason, knowledge, and wisdom; and that allowing them to be certain proofs of a living soul, they cannot be so of a thinking and reasonable one. Upon second thoughts, therefore, and a minute examination of this point, I have found that nothing so much convinces me of the existence of another person as his speaking to me. It is my hearing you talk that, in strict and philosophical truth, is to me the best argument for your being. And this is a peculiar argument inapplicable to your purpose: for you will not, I suppose, pretend that God speaks to man in the same clear and sensible manner, as one man doth to another.

VII. *Euph.* How! is then the impression of sound so much more evident than that of other senses? Or, if it be, is the voice of man louder than that of thunder? *Alc.* Alas! you mistake the point. What I mean is not the sound of speech merely as such, but the arbitrary use of sensible signs, which have no similitude or necessary connexion with the things signified, so as by the apposite management of them, to suggest and exhibit to my mind an endless variety of things, differing in nature, time, and place, thereby informing me, entertaining me, and directing me how to act, not only with regard to things near and present, but also with regard to things distant and future. No matter whether these signs are pronounced or written; whether they enter by the eye or ear: they have the same use, and are equally proofs of an intelligent, thinking, designing cause. *Euph.* But what if it should appear that God really speaks to man; would this content you? *Alc.* I am for admitting no inward speech, no holy instincts, or suggestions of light or spirit. All that, you must know, passeth with men of sense for nothing. If you do not make it plain to me, that God speaks to men by outward sensible signs, of such sort and in such manner as I have defined, you do nothing. *Euph.* But if it shall appear plainly, that God speaks to men by the intervention and use of arbitrary, outward, sensible signs, having no resemblance or necessary connexion with the things they stand for and suggest: if it shall appear, that by innumerable combinations of these signs, an endless variety of things is discovered and made known to us; and that we are thereby instructed or informed in their different natures; that we are taught and admonished what to shun, and what to pursue; and are directed how to regulate our motions, and how

to act with respect to things distant from us, as well in time as place; will this content you? *Alc.* It is the very thing I would have you make out; for therein consists the force, and use, and nature of language.

VIII. *Euph.* Look, Alciphron, do you not see the castle upon yonder hill? *Alc.* I do. *Euph.* Is it not at a great distance from you? *Alc.* It is. *Euph.* Tell me, Alciphron, is not distance a line turned end-wise to the eye? *Alc.* Doubtless. *Euph.* And can a line, in that situation, project more than one single point on the bottom of the eye? *Alc.* It cannot. *Euph.* Therefore the appearance of a long and of a short distance is of the same magnitude, or rather of no magnitude at all, being in all cases one single point. *Alc.* It seems so. *Euph.* Should it not follow from hence, that distance is not immediately perceived by the eye? *Alc.* It should. *Euph.* Must it not then be perceived by the mediation of some other thing? *Alc.* It must. *Euph.* To discover what this is, let us examine what alteration there may be in the appearance of the same object, placed at different distances from the eye. Now I find by experience, that when an object is removed still further and further off, in a direct line from the eye, its visible appearance still grows lesser and fainter, and this change of appearance, being proportional and universal, seems to me to be that by which we apprehend the various degrees of distance. *Alc.* I have nothing to object to this. *Euph.* But littleness or faintness, in their own nature, seem to have no necessary connexion with greater length of distance. *Alc.* I admit this to be true. *Euph.* Will it not follow then, that they could never sugggest it but from experience? *Alc.* It will. *Euph.* That is to say, we perceive distance, not immediately, but by mediation of a sign, which hath no likeness to it, or necessary connexion with it, but only suggests it from repeated experience as words do things. *Alc.* Hold, Euphranor; now I think of it, the writers in optics tell us of an angle made by the two optic axes, where they meet in the visible point or object; which angle the obtuser it is the nearer it shows the object to be, and by how much the acuter by so much the further off; and this by a necessary demonstrable connexion. *Euph.* The mind then finds out the distance of things by geometry. *Alc.* It doth. *Euph.* Should it not follow therefore that nobody could see but those who had learned geometry, and knew something of lines and angles? *Alc.* There is a sort of natural geometry which is got without learning. *Euph.* Pray inform me, Alciphron, in order to frame a proof of any kind, or deduce one point from another, is it not necessary, that I perceive the connexion of the terms in the premises, and the connexion of the premises with the conclusion; and, in general, to know one thing by means of another, must I not first know that other thing?

when I perceive your meaning by your words, must I not first perceive the words themselves? and must I not know the premises before I infer the conclusion? *Alc.* All this is true. *Euph.* Whoever therefore collects a nearer distance from a wider angle, or a further distance from an acuter angle, must first perceive the angles themselves. And he who doth not perceive those angles, can infer nothing from them. Is it so or not? *Alc.* It is as you say. *Euph.* Ask now the first man you meet, whether he perceives or knows any thing of those optic angles? or whether he ever thinks about them, or makes any inferences from them, either by natural or artificial geometry? What answer do you think he would make? *Alc.* To speak the truth, I believe his answer would be, that he knew nothing of those matters. *Euph.* It cannot therefore be, that men judge of distance by angles: nor consequently can there be any force in the argument you drew from thence, to prove that distance is perceived by means of something which hath a necessary connexion with it. *Alc.* I agree with you.

IX. *Euph.* To me it seems, that a man may know whether he perceives a thing or no; and if he perceives it, whether it be immediately or mediately: and if mediately, whether by means of something like or unlike, necessarily or arbitrarily connected with it. *Alc.* It seems so. *Euph.* And is it not certain, that distance is perceived only by experience, if it be neither perceived immediately by itself, nor by means of any image, nor of any lines and angles, which are like it, or have a necessary connexion with it? *Alc.* It is. *Euph.* Doth it not seem to follow from what hath been said and allowed by you that before all experience a man would not imagine the things he saw were at any distance from him? *Alc.* How! let me see. *Euph.* The littleness or faintness of appearance, or any other idea or sensation not necessarily connected with, or resembling distance, can no more suggest different degrees of distance, or any distance at all, to the mind, which hath not experienced a connexion of the things signifying and signified, than words can suggest notions before a man hath learned the language. *Alc.* I allow this to be true. *Euph.* Will it not thence follow, that a man born blind, and made to see, would upon first receiving his sight, take the things he saw, not to be at any distance from him, but in his eye, or rather in his mind? *Alc.* I must own it seems so; and yet, on the other hand, I can hardly persuade myself, that, if I were in such a state, I should think those objects, which I now see at so great distance, to be at no distance at all. *Euph.* It seems then, that you now think the objects of sight are at a distance from you. *Alc.* Doubtless I do. Can any one question but yonder castle is at a great distance? *Euph.* Tell me, Alciphron, can you discern the doors, windows, and battlements of that same castle? *Alc.*

I cannot. At this distance it seems only a small round tower. *Euph.* But I, who have been at it, know that it is no small round tower, but a large square building with battlements and turrets, which it seems you do not see. *Alc.* What will you infer from thence? *Euph.* I would infer, that the very object, which you strictly and properly perceive by sight, is not that thing which is several miles distant. *Alc.* Why so? *Euph.* Because a little round object is one thing, and a great square object is another. Is it not? *Alc.* I cannot deny it. *Euph.* Tell me, is not the visible appearance alone the proper object of sight? *Alc.* It is. What think you now (said Euphranor, pointing towards the heavens) of the visible appearance of yonder planet? Is it not a round luminous flat, no bigger than a sixpence? *Alc.* What then? *Euph.* Tell me then, what you think of the planet itself. Do you not conceive it to be a vast opaque globe, with several unequal risings and vallies? *Alc.* I do. *Euph.* How can you therefore conclude, that the proper object of your sight exists at a distance? *Alc.* I confess I know not. *Euph.* For your further conviction, do but consider that crimson cloud. Think you that if you were in the very place where it is, you would perceive any thing like what you now see? *Alc.* By no means. I should perceive only a dark mist. *Euph.* Is it not plain, therefore, that neither the castle, the planet, nor the cloud, which you see here, are those real ones which you suppose exist at a distance.

X. *Alc.* What am I to think then? Do we see any thing at all, or is it altogether fancy and illusion? *Euph.* Upon the whole, it seems the proper objects of sight are light and colours, with their several shades and degrees, all which, being infinitely diversified and combined, do form a language wonderfully adapted to suggest and exhibit to us the distances, figures, situations, dimensions, and various qualities of tangible objects; not by similitude, nor yet by inference of necessary connexion, but by the arbitrary imposition of Providence, just as words suggest the things signified by them. *Alc.* How! do we not, strictly speaking, perceive by sight such things as trees, houses, men, rivers, and the like? *Euph.* We do, indeed, perceive or apprehend those things by the faculty of sight; but will it follow from thence, that they are the proper and immediate objects of sight, any more than that all those things are the proper and immediate objects of hearing, which are signified by the help of words or sounds? *Alc.* You would have us think then, that light, shades, and colours, variously combined, answer to the several articulations of sound in language, and that, by means thereof, all sorts of objects are suggested to the mind through the eye, in the same manner as they are suggested by words or sounds through the ear; that is, neither from necessary deduction to the judgment, nor from similitude to

the fancy, but purely and solely from experience, custom, and habit. *Euph.* I would not have you think any thing more than the nature of things obligeth you to think, nor submit in the least to my judgment, but only to the force of truth, which is an imposition that I suppose the freest thinkers will not pretend to be exempt from. *Alc.* You have led me, it seems, step by step, till I am got I know not where. But I shall try to get out again, if not by the way I came, yet by some other of my own finding. Here Alciphron, having made a short pause, proceeded as follows.

XI. Answer me, Euphranor, should it not follow from these principles, that a man born blind, and made to see, would at first sight, not only not perceive their distance, but also not so much as know the very things themselves which he saw, for instance, men or trees? which surely to suppose must be absurd. *Euph.* I grant, in consequence of those principles, which both you and I have admitted, that such a one would never think of men, trees, or any other objects that he had been accustomed to perceive by touch, upon having his mind filled with new sensations of light and colours, whose various combinations he doth not yet understand, or know the meaning of, no more than a Chinese, upon first hearing the words man and tree, would think of the things signified by them. In both cases, there must be time and experience, by repeated acts, to acquire a habit of knowing the connexion between the signs and things signified, that is to say, of understanding the language, whether of the eyes or of the ears. And I conceive no absurdity in all this. *Alc.* I see therefore, in strict philosophical truth, that rock only in the same sense that I may be said to hear it, when the word rock is pronounced. *Euph.* In the very same. *Alc.* How comes it to pass then, that every one shall say he sees, for instance, a rock or a house, when those things are before his eyes: but nobody will say he hears a rock or a house, but only the words or sounds themselves, by which those things are said to be signified or suggested, but not heard? besides, if vision be only a language speaking to the eyes, it may be asked, when did men learn this language? To acquire the knowledge of so many signs, as go to the making up a language, is a work of some difficulty. But will any man say he hath spent time, or been at pains, to learn this language of vision? *Euph.* No wonder, we cannot assign a time beyond our remotest memory. If we have been all practising this language, ever since our first entrance into the world: if the Author of nature constantly speaks to the eyes of all mankind, even in their earliest infancy, whenever the eyes are open in the light, whether alone or in company: it doth not seem to me at all strange, that men should not be aware they had ever learned a language, begun so early, and practised so constantly as this of vision. And, if we

also consider that it is the same throughout the whole world, and not, like other languages, differing in different places, it will not seem unaccountable, that men should mistake the connexion between the proper objects of sight and the things signified by them, to be founded in necessary relation, or likeness, or that they should even take them for the same things. Hence it seems easy to conceive, why men, who do not think, should confound in this language of vision the signs with the things signified, otherwise than they are wont to do, in the various particular languages formed by the several nations of men.

XII. It may be also worth while to observe, that signs being little considered in themselves, or for their own sake, but only in their relative capacity, and for the sake of those things whereof they are signs, it comes to pass, that the mind often overlooks them, so as to carry its attention immediately on to the things signified. Thus, for example, in reading we run over the characters with the slightest regard, and pass on to the meaning. Hence it is frequent for men to say, they see words, and notions, and things, in reading of a book; whereas in strictness they see only the characters, which suggest words, notions, and things. And by parity of reason, may we not suppose, that men, not resting in, but overlooking, the immediate and proper objects of sight, as in their own nature of small moment, carry their attention onward to the very things signified, and talk as if they saw the secondary objects, which, in truth and strictness, are not seen but only suggested and apprehended by means of the proper objects of sight, which alone are seen? *Alc.* To speak my mind freely, this dissertation grows tedious, and runs into points too dry and minute for a gentleman's attention. I thought, said Crito, we had been told, that minute philosophers loved to consider things closely and minutely. *Alc.* That is true, but in so polite an age who would be a mere philosopher? There is a certain scholastic accuracy, which ill suits the freedom and ease of a well-bred man. But, to cut short this chicane, I propound it fairly to your own conscience, whether you really think, that God himself speaks every day and in every place to the eyes of all men. *Euph.* That is really and in truth my opinion; and it should be yours too, if you are consistent with yourself, and abide by your own definition of language. Since you cannot deny, that the great mover and author of nature constantly explaineth himself to the eyes of men by the sensible intervention of arbitrary signs, which have no similitude or connexion with the things signified; so as by compounding and disposing them, to suggest and exhibit an endless variety of objects differing in nature, time, and place, thereby informing and directing men how to act with respect to things distant and future, as well as near and present. In consequence, I say, of your own sentiments and concessions, you

have as much reason to think, the universal agent or God speaks to your eyes, as you can have for thinking any particular person speaks to your ears. *Alc.* I cannot help thinking, that some fallacy runs throughout this whole ratiocination, though perhaps I may not readily point it out. Hold! let me see. In language the signs are arbitrary, are they not? *Euph.* They are. *Alc.* And consequently, they do not always suggest real matters of fact. Whereas this natural language, as you call it, or these visible signs, do always suggest things in the same uniform way, and have the same constant, regular connexion with matters of fact: whence it should seem, the connexion was necessary; and therefore, according to the definition premised, it can be no language. How do you solve this objection? *Euph.* You may solve it yourself, by the help of a picture or looking-glass. *Alc.* You are in the right. I see there is nothing in it. I know not what else to say to this opinion, more than it is so odd and contrary to my way of thinking, that I shall never assent to it.

XIII. *Euph.* Be pleased to recollect your own lectures upon prejudice, and apply them in the present case. Perhaps they may help you to follow where reason leads, and to suspect notions which are strongly riveted, without having been ever examined. *Alc.* I disdain the suspicion of prejudice. And I do not speak only for myself. I know a club of most ingenious men, the freest from prejudice of any men alive, who abhor the notion of a God, and I doubt not would be very able to untie this knot. Upon which words of Alciphron, I, who had acted the part of an indifferent stander-by, observed to him, that it misbecame his character and repeated professions, to own an attachment to the judgment, or build upon the presumed abilities of other men, how ingenious soever; and that this proceeding might encourage his adversaries to have recourse to authority, in which perhaps they would find their account more than he. Oh! said Crito, I have often observed the conduct of minute philosophers. When one of them has got a ring of disciples round him, his method is to exclaim against prejudice, and recommend thinking and reasoning, giving to understand that himself is a man of deep researches and close argument, one who examines impartially and concludes warily. The same man in other company, if he chance to be pressed with reason, shall laugh at logic, and assume the lazy, supine airs of a fine gentleman, a wit, a *railleur*, to avoid the dryness of a regular and exact inquiry. This double face of the minute philosopher is of no small use to propagate and maintain his notions. Though to me it seems a plain case, that if a fine gentleman will shake off authority, and appeal from religion to reason, unto reason he must go: and if he cannot go without leading strings, surely he had better be led by the authority of the public, than by that of any knot of

minute philosophers. *Alc.* Gentlemen, this discourse is very irksome and needless. For my part, I am a friend to inquiry. I am willing reason should have its full and free scope. I build on no man's authority. For my part, I have no interest in denying a God. Any man may believe or not believe a God, as he pleases, for me. But after all, Euphranor must allow me to stare a little at his conclusions. *Euph.* The conclusions are yours as much as mine, for you were led to them by your own concessions.

XIV. You, it seems, stare to find, that God is not far from every one of us, and that in him we live, and move, and have our being. You, who in the beginning of this morning's conference thought it strange, that God should leave himself without a witness, do now think it strange the witness should be so full and clear. *Alc.* I must own I do. I was aware, indeed, of a certain metaphysical hypothesis, of our seeing all things in God by the union of the human soul with the intelligible substance of the Deity, which neither I nor any one else could make sense of. But I never imagined it could be pretended, that we saw God with our fleshly eyes as plain as we see any human person whatsoever, and that he daily speaks to our senses in a manifest and clear dialect. *Cri.* This language hath a necessary connexion with knowledge, wisdom, and goodness. It is equivalent to a constant creation, betokening an immediate act of power and providence. It cannot be accounted for by mechanical principles, by atoms, attractions, or effluvia. The instantaneous production and reproduction of so many signs combined, dissolved, transposed, diversified, and adapted to such an endless variety of purposes, ever shifting with the occasions and suited to them, being utterly inexplicable and unaccountable by the laws of motion, by chance, by fate, or the like blind principles, doth set forth and testify the immediate operation of a spirit or thinking being; and not merely of a spirit, which every motion or gravitation may possibly infer, but of one wise, good, and provident Spirit, who directs, and rules, and governs the world. Some philosophers, being convinced of the wisdom and power of the Creator, from the make and contrivance of organized bodies and orderly system of the world, did nevertheless imagine that he left this system, with all its parts and contents well adjusted and put in motion, as an artist leaves a clock, to go thenceforward of itself for a certain period. But this visual language proves, not a Creator merely, but a provident governor, actually and intimately present and attentive to all our interests and motions, who watches over our conduct, and takes care of our minutest actions and designs, throughout the whole course of our lives, informing, admonishing, and directing incessantly, in a most evident and sensible manner. This is truly wonderful.

Euph. And is it not so, that men should be encompassed by such a wonder, without reflecting on it?

XV. Something there is of divine and admirable in this language, addressed to our eyes, that may well awaken the mind, and deserve its utmost attention: it is learned with so little pains; it expresseth the differences of things so clearly and aptly; it instructs with such facility and despatch, by one glance of the eye conveying a greater variety of advices, and a more distinct knowledge of things than could be got by a discourse of several hours: and, while it informs, it amuses and entertains the mind with such singular pleasure and delight: it is of such excellent use in giving a stability and permanency to human discourse, in recording sounds and bestowing life on dead languages, enabling us to converse with men of remote ages and countries: and it answers so apposite to the uses and necessities of mankind, informing us more distinctly of those objects, whose nearness and magnitude qualify them to be of greatest detriment or benefit to our bodies, and less exactly, in proportion as their littleness or distance make them of less concern to us. *Alc.* And yet these strange things affect men but little. *Euph.* But they are not strange, they are familiar, and that makes them be overlooked. Things which rarely happen strike; whereas frequency lessens the admiration of things, though in themselves ever so admirable. Hence a common man, who is not used to think and make reflections, would probably be more convinced of the being of a God, by one single sentence heard once in his life from the sky, than by all the experience he has had of this visual language, contrived with such exquisite skill, so constantly addressed to his eyes, and so plainly declaring the nearness, wisdom, and providence, of him with whom we have to do. *Alc.* After all, I cannot satisfy myself, how men should be so little surprised or amazed about this visive faculty, if it was really of a nature so surprising and amazing. *Euph.* But let us suppose a nation of men blind from their infancy, among whom a stranger arrives, the only man who can see in all the country: let us suppose this stranger travelling with some of the natives, and that while he foretells to them, that in case they walk straight forward, in half an hour they shall meet men or cattle, or come to a house; that if they turn to the right and proceed, they shall, in a few minutes, be in danger of falling down a precipice; that shaping their course to the left they will, in such a time, arrive at a river, a wood, or a mountain. What think you? must they not be infinitely surprised that one, who had never been in their country before, should know it so much better than themselves? And would not those predictions seem to them as unaccountable and incredible, as prophecy to a minute philosopher? *Alc.* I cannot deny it. *Euph.* But it seems to

require intense thought, to be able to unravel a prejudice that has been so long forming, to get over the vulgar error of ideas common to both senses, and so to distinguish between the objects of sight and touch,* which have grown (if I may so say) blended together in our fancy, as to be able to suppose ourselves exactly in the state that one of those men would be in, if he were made to see. And yet this I believe is possible, and might seem worth the pains of a little thinking, especially to those men whose proper employment and profession it is to think, and unravel prejudices, and confute mistakes. *Alc.* I frankly own I cannot find my way out of this maze, and should gladly be set right by those who see better than myself. *Cri.* The pursuing this subject in their own thoughts would possibly open a new scene to those speculative gentlemen of the minute philosophy. It puts me in mind of a passage in the psalmist, where he represents God to be covered with light as with a garment, and would, methinks, be no ill comment on that ancient notion of some eastern sages, that God had light for his body, and truth for his soul. This conversation lasted till a servant came to tell us the tea was ready: upon which we walked in, and found Lysicles at the tea-table.

XVI. As soon as we sat down, I am glad, said Alciphron, that I have here found my second, a fresh man to maintain our common cause, which, I doubt, Lysicles will think hath suffered by his absence. *Lys.* Why so? *Alc.* I have been drawn into some concessions you will not like. *Lys.* Let me know what they are. *Alc.* Why, that there is such a thing as a God, and that his existence is very certain. *Lys.* Bless me! how came you to entertain so wild a notion? *Alc.* You know we profess to follow reason wherever it leads. And, in short, I have been reasoned into it. *Lys.* Reasoned! you should say amused with words, bewildered with sophistry. *Euph.* Have you a mind to hear the same reasoning that led Alciphron and me step by step, that we may examine whether it be sophistry or no? *Lys.* As to that I am very easy. I guess all that can be said on that head. It shall be my business to help my friend out, whatever arguments drew him in. *Euph.* Will you admit the premises and deny the conclusions? *Lys.* What if I admit the conclusion? *Euph.* How! will you grant there is a God. *Lys.* Perhaps I may. *Euph.* Then we are agreed. *Lys.* Perhaps not. *Euph.* O Lysicles, you are a subtle adversary. I know not what you would be at. *Lys.* You must know then, that at bottom the being of a God is a point in itself of small consequence, and a man may make this concession without yielding much. The great point is, what sense the word God is to be

* See the foregoing Treatise, wherein this point and the whole theory of vision are more fully explained.

taken in. The very Epicureans allowed the being of gods: but then they were indolent gods, unconcerned with human affairs. Hobbes allowed a corporeal God, and Spinosa held the universe to be God. And yet nobody doubts they were staunch free-thinkers. I could wish indeed the word God were quite omitted, because, in most minds, it is coupled with a sort of superstitious awe, the very root of all religion. I shall not, nevertheless, be much disturbed, though the name be retained, and the being of God allowed in any sense but in that of a mind, which knows all things, and beholds human actions, like some judge or magistrate, with infinite observation and intelligence. The belief of a God in this sense fills a man's mind with scruples, lays him under constraints, and embitters his very being: but in another sense, it may be attended with no great ill consequence. This I know was the opinion of our great Diagoras, who told me he would never have been at the pains to find out a demonstration that there was no God, if the received notion of God had been the same with that of some fathers and schoolmen. *Euph.* Pray what was that?

XVII. *Lys.* You must know, Diagoras, a man of much reading and inquiry, had discovered that once upon a time, the most profound and speculative divines, finding it impossible to reconcile the attributes of God, taken in the common sense, or in any known sense, with human reason, and the appearance of things, taught that the words knowledge, wisdom, goodness, and such like, when spoken of the Deity, must be understood in a quite different sense, from what they signify in the vulgar acceptation, or from any thing that we can form a notion of, or conceive. Hence, whatever objections might be made against the attributes of God they easily solved, by denying those attributes belonged to God, in this or that or any known particular sense or notion; which was the same thing as to deny they belonged to him at all. And thus denying the attributes of God they in effect denied his being, though perhaps they were not aware of it. Suppose, for instance, a man should object, that future contingencies were inconsistent with the foreknowledge of God, because it is repugnant that certain knowledge should be of an uncertain thing: it was a ready and an easy answer to say, that this may be true, with respect to knowledge taken in the common sense, or in any sense that we can possibly form any notion of; but that there would not appear the same inconsistency, between the contingent nature of things and divine foreknowledge, taken to signify somewhat that we know nothing of, which in God supplies the place of what we understand by knowledge; from which it differs not in quantity or degree of perfection, but altogether, and in kind, as light doth from sound; and even more, since these agree in that they are both sensations: whereas

knowledge in God hath no sort of resemblance or agreement with any notion that man can frame of knowledge. The like may be said of all the other attributes, which indeed may by this means be equally reconciled with every thing or with nothing. But all men who think must needs see, this is cutting knots and not untying them. For how are things reconciled with the divine attributes, when these attributes themselves are in every intelligible sense denied; and consequently the very notion of God taken away, and nothing left but the name, without any meaning annexed to it? In short, the belief that there is an unknown subject of attributes absolutely unknown is a very innocent doctrine; which the acute Diagoras well saw, and was therefore wonderfully delighted with this system.

XVIII. For, said he, if this could once make its way and obtain in the world, there would be an end of all natural or rational religion, which is the basis both of the Jewish and the Christian: for he who comes to God, or enters himself in the church of God, must first believe that there is a God in some intelligible sense; and not only that there is something in general without any proper notion, though never so inadequate, of any of its qualities or attributes; for this may be fate, or chaos, or plastic nature, or any thing else as well as God. Nor will it avail to say, there is something in this unknown being analogous to knowledge and goodness; that is to say, which produceth those effects which we could not conceive to be produced by men in any degree, without knowledge and goodness. For this is in fact to give up the point in dispute between theists and atheists, the question having always been, not whether there was a principle (which point was allowed by philosophers as well before as since Anaxagoras), but whether this principle was a νοῦς, a thinking, intelligent being: that is to say, whether that order, and beauty, and use, visible in natural effects, could be produced by any thing but a mind or intelligence, in the proper sense of the word; and whether there must not be true, real, and proper knowledge in the first cause. We will therefore acknowledge, that all those natural effects, which are vulgarly ascribed to knowledge and wisdom, proceed from a being in which there is, properly speaking, no knowledge or wisdom at all, but only something else, which, in reality, is the cause of those things which men, for want of knowing better, ascribe to what they call knowledge and wisdom and understanding. You wonder perhaps to hear a man of pleasure, who diverts himself as I do, philosophize at this rate. But you should consider that much is to be got by conversing with ingenious men, which is a short way to knowledge, that saves a man the drudgery of reading and thinking. And now we have granted to you that there is a God in this indefinite sense, I would fain see what use you can make of this concession. You cannot argue from unknown attributes, or which is the same thing, from attri-

butes in an unknown sense. You cannot prove, that God is to be loved for his goodness, or feared for his justice, or respected for his knowledge: all which consequences, we own, would follow from those attributes admitted in an intelligible sense; but we deny that those or any other consequences can be drawn from attributes admitted in no particular sense, or in a sense which none of us understand. Since therefore nothing can be inferred from such an account of God, about conscience, or worship, or religion, you may even make the best of it; and, not to be singular, we will use the name too, and so at once there is an end of atheism. *Euph.* This account of a Deity is new to me. I do not like it, and therefore shall leave it to be maintained by those who do.

XIX. *Cri.* It is not new to me. I remember not long since to have heard a minute philosopher triumph upon this very point; which put me on inquiring what foundation there was for it in the fathers or schoolmen. And, for aught that I can find, it owes its original to those writings, which have been published under the name of Dionysius the Areopagite. The author of which, it must be owned, hath written upon the divine attributes in a very singular style. In his treatise of the celestial hierarchy* he saith, that God is something above all essence and life, ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν οὐσίαν καὶ ζωὴν; and again in his treatise of the divine names,† that he is above all wisdom and understanding, ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν σοφίαν καὶ σύνεσιν, ineffable and innominable, ἄῤῥητος καὶ ἀνώνυμος; the wisdom of God he terms an unreasonable, unintelligent, and foolish wisdom; τὴν ἄλογον καὶ ἄνουν καὶ μωρὰν σοφίαν. But then the reason he gives, for expressing himself in this strange manner, is, that the divine wisdom is the cause of all reason, wisdom, and understanding, and therein are contained the treasures of all wisdom and knowledge. He calls God ὑπέρσοφος and ὑπέρζως; as if wisdom and life were words not worthy to express the divine perfections: and he adds, that the attributes *unintelligent* and *unperceiving* must be ascribed to the divinity, not κατ' ἔλλειψιν, by way of defect, but καθ' ὑπεροχὴν, by way of eminency; which he explains by our giving the name of darkness to light inaccessible. And, notwithstanding the harshness of his expressions in some places, he affirms over and over in others, that God knows all things; not that he is beholden to the creatures for his knowledge, but by knowing himself, from whom they all derive their being, and in whom they are contained as in their cause. It was late before these writings appear to have been known in the world; and although they obtained credit during the age of the schoolmen, yet since critical learning hath been cultivated, they have lost that credit, and are at this day given up for spurious, as containing several evident marks of a much later date than the age of Dionysius.

* De Hierarch. Cœlest. c. 2. † De Nom. Div. c. 7.

Upon the whole, although this method of growing in expression, and dwindling in notion, of clearing up doubts by nonsense, and avoiding difficulties by running into affected contradictions, may perhaps proceed from a well-meant zeal; yet it appears not to be according to knowledge, and instead of reconciling atheists to the truth, hath, I doubt, a tendency to confirm them in their own persuasion. It should seem, therefore, very weak and rash in a Christian to adopt this harsh language of an apocryphal writer, preferably to that of the holy scriptures. I remember, indeed, to have read of a certain philosopher, who lived some centuries ago, that used to say, if these supposed works of Dionysius had been known to the primitive fathers, they would have furnished them admirable weapons against the heretics, and would have saved a world of pains. But the event since their discovery hath by no means confirmed his opinion. It must be owned, the celebrated Picus of Mirandula, among his nine hundred conclusions (which that prince, being very young, proposed to maintain by public disputation at Rome), hath this for one; to wit, that it is more improper to say of God, he is an intellect or intelligent being, than to say of a reasonable soul that it is an angel: which doctrine it seems was not relished. And Picus, when he comes to defend it, supports himself altogether by the example and authority of Dionysius, and in effect explains it away into a mere verbal difference, affirming, that neither Dionysius nor himself ever meant to deprive God of knowledge, or to deny that he knows all things: but that, as reason is of kind peculiar to man, so by intellection he understands a kind or manner of knowing peculiar to angels: and that the knowledge which is in God is more above the intellection of angels, than angel is above man. He adds that, as his tenet consists with admitting the most perfect knowledge in God, so he would by no means be understood to exclude from the Deity intellection itself, taken in the common or general sense, but only that peculiar sort of intellection proper to angels, which he thinks ought not to be attributed to God any more than human reason.* Picus, therefore, though he speaks as the apocryphal Dionysius, yet when he explains himself, it is evident he speaks like other men. And although the forementioned books of the celestial hierarchy and of the divine names, being attributed to a saint and martyr of the apostolical age, were respected by the schoolmen, yet it is certain they rejected or softened his harsh expressions, and explained away or reduced his doctrine to the received notions taken from holy scripture and the light of nature.

XX. Thomas Aquinas expresseth his sense of this point in the following manner. All perfections, saith he, derived from God to the creatures are in a certain higher sense, or (as the

* Pic. Mirand. in Apolog. p. 155, ed. Bas.

schoolmen term it) eminently in God. Whenever, therefore, a name borrowed from any perfection in the creature is attributed to God, we must exclude from its signification every thing that belongs to the imperfect manner, wherein that attribute is found in the creature. Whence he concludes, that knowledge in God is not a habit, but a pure act.* And again the same doctor observes, that our intellect gets its notions of all sorts of perfections from the creatures, and that, as it apprehends those perfections, so it signifies them by names. Therefore, saith he, in attributing these names to God, we are to consider two things; first, the perfections themselves, as goodness, life, and the like, which are properly in God; and secondly, the manner which is peculiar to the creature, and cannot, strictly and properly speaking, be said to agree to the Creator.† And although Suarez, with other schoolmen, teacheth, that the mind of man conceiveth knowledge and will to be in God as faculties or operations, by analogy only to created beings; yet he gives it plainly as his opinion, that when knowledge is said not to be properly in God, it must be understood in a sense including imperfection, such as discursive knowledge, or the like imperfect kind found in the creatures: and that, none of those imperfections in the knowledge of men or angels belonging to the formal notion of knowledge, or to knowledge as such, it will not thence follow that knowledge, in its proper formal sense, may not be attributed to God; and of knowledge taken in general for the clear evident understanding of all truth, he expressly affirms that it is in God, and that this was never denied by any philosopher who believed a God.‡ It was, indeed, a current opinion in the schools, that even being itself should be attributed analogically to God and the creatures. That is, they held that God, the supreme, independent, self-originate cause and source of all beings, must not be supposed to exist in the same sense with created beings, not that he exists less truly, properly, or formally than they, but only because he exists in a more eminent and perfect manner.

XXI. But to prevent any man's being led, by mistaking the scholastic use of the terms analogy and analogical, into an opinion that we cannot frame in any degree a true and proper notion of attributes applied by analogy, or, in the school phrase, predicated analogically, it may not be amiss to inquire into the true sense and meaning of those words. Every one knows, that analogy is a Greek word used by mathematicians, to signify a similitude of proportions. For instance, when we observe that two is to six as three is to nine, this similitude or equality of proportion is termed analogy. And although proportion strictly signifies the habitude or relation of one quantity to another, yet, in a looser and

* Sum. Theolog. p. i. quest. 14, art. 1. † Ibid., quest. 13, art. 3.
‡ Suarez Disp. Metaph. tom. ii. disp. 30, sect. 15.

translated sense, it hath been applied to signify every other habitude; and consequently the term analogy comes to signify all similitude of relations or habitudes whatsoever. Hence, the schoolmen tell us there is analogy between intellect and sight; forasmuch as intellect is to the mind what sight is to the body: and that he who governs the state is analogous to him who steers a ship. Hence a prince is analogically styled a pilot, being to the state as a pilot is to his vessel.* For the further clearing of this point it is to be observed, that a twofold analogy is distinguished by the schoolmen, metaphorical and proper. Of the first kind there are frequent instances in holy scripture, attributing human parts and passions to God. When he is represented as having a finger, an eye, or an ear, when he is said to repent, to be angry or grieved, every one sees the analogy is merely metaphorical. Because those parts and passions, taken in the proper signification, must in every degree necessarily, and from the formal nature of the thing, include imperfection. When therefore it is said, the finger of God appears in this or that event, men of common sense mean no more, but that it is as truly ascribed to God, as the works wrought by human fingers are to man: and so of the rest. But the case is different when wisdom and knowledge are attributed to God. Passions and senses, as such, imply defect; but in knowledge simply, or as such, there is no defect. Knowledge, therefore, in the proper formal meaning of the word, may be attributed to God proportionably, that is, preserving a proportion to the infinite nature of God. We may say, therefore, that as God is infinitely above man, so is the knowledge of God infinitely above the knowledge of man, and this is what Cajetan calls *analogia proprie facta.* And after this same analogy, we must understand all those attributes to belong to the Deity, which in themselves simply, and as such, denote perfection. We may therefore, consistently with what hath been premised, affirm that all sorts of perfection, which we can conceive in a finite spirit, are in God, but without any of that alloy which is found in the creatures. This doctrine, therefore, of analogical perfections in God, or our knowing God by analogy, seems very much misunderstood and misapplied by those who would infer from thence, that we cannot frame any direct or proper notion, though never so inadequate, of knowledge or wisdom, as they are in the Deity, or understand any more of them than one born blind can of light and colours.

XXII. And now, gentlemen, it may be expected I should ask your pardon for having dwelt so long on a point of metaphysics, and introduced such unpolished and unfashionable writers as the schoolmen into good company: but as Lysicles gave the occasion, I leave him to answer for it. *Lys.* I never dreamt of this dry

* Vide Cajetan. de Nom. Analog. c. iii.

dissertation. But if I have been the occasion of discussing these scholastic points, by my unluckily mentioning the schoolmen, it was my first fault of the kind, and I promise it shall be the last. The meddling with crabbed authors of any sort is none of my taste. I grant one meets now and then with a good notion in what we call dry writers, such a one for example as this I was speaking of, which I must own struck my fancy. But then for these we have such as Prodicus or Diagoras, who look into obsolete books, and save the rest of us that trouble. *Cri.* So you pin your faith upon them. *Lys.* It is only for some odd opinions, and matters of fact, and critical points. Besides, we know the men to whom we give credit: they are judicious and honest, and have no end to serve but truth. And I am confident some author or other has maintained the forementioned notion in the same sense as Diagoras related it. *Cri.* That may be. But it never was a received notion, and never will, so long as men believe a God; the same arguments that prove a first cause proving an intelligent cause: intelligent, I say, in the proper sense: wise and good in the true and formal acceptation of the words. Otherwise it is evident, that every syllogism brought to prove those attributes, or (which is the same thing) to prove the being of a God, will be found to consist of four terms, and consequently can conclude nothing. But for your part, Alciphron, you have been fully convinced, that God is a thinking, intelligent being in the same sense with other spirits, though not in the same imperfect manner or degree.

XXIII. *Alc.* And yet I am not without my scruples: for with knowledge you infer wisdom, and with wisdom goodness. But how is it possible to conceive God so good, and man so wicked? It may perhaps with some colour be alleged, that a little soft shadowing of evil sets off the bright and luminous parts of the creation, and so contributes to the beauty of the whole piece: but for blots so large and so black it is impossible to account by that principle. That there should be so much vice and so little virtue upon earth, and that the laws of God's kingdom should be so ill observed by his subjects, is what can never be reconciled with that surpassing wisdom and goodness of the supreme monarch. *Euph.* Tell me, Alciphron, would you argue that a state was ill-administered, or judge of the manners of its citizens, by the disorders committed in the gaol or dungeon? *Alc.* I would not. *Euph.* And for aught we know, this spot, with the few sinners on it, bears no greater proportion to the universe of intelligences, than a dungeon doth to a kingdom. It seems we are led not only by revelation but by common sense, observing and inferring from the analogy of visible things, to conclude there are innumerable orders of intelligent beings more happy and more perfect than man, whose life is but a span, and whose

place this earthly globe is but a point in respect of the whole system of God's creation. We are dazzled indeed with the glory and grandeur of things here below, because we know no better. But I am apt to think, if we knew what it was to be an angel for one hour, we should return to this world, though it were to sit on the brightest throne in it, with vastly more loathing and reluctance than we would now descend into a loathsome dungeon or sepulchre.

XXIV. *Cri.* To me it seems natural that such a weak, passionate, and short-sighted creature as man, should be ever liable to scruples of one kind or other. But, as this same creature is apt to be over positive in judging, and over hasty in concluding, it falls out that these difficulties and scruples about God's conduct are made objections to his being. And so men come to argue from their own defects against the divine perfections. And as the views and humours of men are different and often opposite, you may sometimes see them deduce the same atheistical conclusion from contrary premises. I knew an instance of this, in two minute philosophers of my acquaintance, who used to argue each from his own temper against a Providence. One of them, a man of a choleric and a vindictive spirit, said he could not believe a Providence, because London was not swallowed up or consumed by fire from heaven, the streets being, as he said, full of people who show no other belief or worship of God, but perpetually praying that he would damn, rot, sink, and confound them. The other, being of an indolent and easy temper, concluded there could be no such thing as a Providence, for that a being of consummate wisdom must needs employ himself better, than in minding the prayers, and actions, and little interests of mankind. *Alc.* After all, if God have no passions, how can it be true that vengeance is his? Or how can he be said to be jealous of his glory? *Cri.* We believe that God executes vengeance without revenge, and is jealous without weakness, just as the mind of man sees without eyes, and apprehends without hands.

XXV. *Alc.* To put a period to this discourse we will grant, there is a God in this dispassionate sense; but what then? What hath this to do with religion or divine worship? To what purpose are all these prayers, and praises, and thanksgivings, and singing of psalms, which the foolish vulgar call serving God? What sense, or use, or end is there in all these things? *Cri.* We worship God, we praise and pray to him: not because we think that he is proud of our worship, or fond of our praise or prayers, and affected with them as mankind are, or that all our service can contribute in the least degree to his happiness or good: but because it is good for us to be so disposed towards God: because it is just and right, and suitable to the nature of things, and becoming the relation we stand in to our supreme

Lord and governor. *Alc.* If it be good for us to worship God, it should seem that the Christian religion, which pretends to teach men the knowledge and worship of God, was of some use and benefit to mankind. *Cri.* Doubtless. *Alc.* If this can be made to appear, I shall own myself very much mistaken. *Cri.* It is now near dinner-time; wherefore if you please we will put an end to this conversation for the present, and to-morrow morning resume our subject.

THE FIFTH DIALOGUE.

I. Minute philosophers join in the cry, and follow the scent of others. II. Worship prescribed by the Christian religion suitable to God and man. III. Power and influence of the Druids. IV. Excellency and usefulness of the Christian religion. V. It ennobles mankind, and makes them happy. VI. Religion neither bigotry nor superstition. VII. Physicians and physic for the soul. VIII. Character of the clergy. IX. Natural religion and human reason not to be disparaged. X. Tendency and use of the Gentile religion. XI. Good effects of Christianity. XII. Englishmen compared with ancient Greeks and Romans. XIII. The modern practice of duelling. XIV. Character of the old Romans, how to be formed. XV. Genuine fruits of the gospel. XVI. Wars and factions not an effect of the Christian religion. XVII. Civil rage and massacres in Greece and Rome. XVIII. Virtue of ancient Greeks. XIX. Quarrels of polemical divines. XX. Tyranny, usurpation, sophistry of ecclesiastics. XXI. The universities censured. XXII. Divine writings of a certain modern critic. XXIII. Learning the effect of religion. XXIV. Barbarism of the schools. XXV. Restoration of learning and polite arts, to whom owing. XXVI. Prejudice and ingratitude of minute philosophers. XXVII. Their pretensions and conduct inconsistent. XXVIII. Men and brutes compared with respect to religion. XXIX. Christianity the only means to establish natural religion. XXX. Free-thinkers mistake their talents; have a strong imagination. XXXI. Tithes and church lands. XXXII. Men distinguished from human creatures. XXXIII. Distribution of mankind into birds, beasts, and fishes. XXXIV. Plea for reason allowed, but unfairness taxed. XXXV. Freedom a blessing, or a curse, as it is used. XXXVI. Priestcraft not the reigning evil.

I. We amused ourselves next day every one to his fancy, till nine of the clock, when word was brought that the tea-table was set in the library, which is a gallery on a groundfloor, with an arched door at one end opening into a walk of limes; where, as soon as we had drank tea, we were tempted by fine weather to take a walk which led us to a small mount of easy ascent, on the top whereof we found a seat under a spreading tree. Here we had a prospect on one hand of a narrow bay or creek of the sea, enclosed on either side by a coast beautified with rocks and woods, and green banks and farm-houses. At the end of the bay was a small town placed upon the slope of a hill, which, from the advantage of its situation, made a considerable figure. Several fishing-boats and lighters gliding up and down on a surface as smooth and bright as glass enlivened the prospect. On the other side we looked down on green pastures, flocks, and herds, basking beneath in sunshine, while we in our superior situation enjoyed the freshness of air and shade. Here we felt that sort

of joyful instinct which a rural scene and fine weather inspire; and proposed no small pleasure, in resuming and continuing our conference without interruption till dinner: but we had hardly seated ourselves, and looked about us, when we saw a fox run by the foot of our mount into an adjacent thicket. A few minutes after, we heard a confused noise of the opening of hounds, the winding of horns, and the roaring of country squires. While our attention was suspended by this event, a servant came running out of breath, and told Crito, that his neighbour Ctesippus, a squire of note, was fallen from his horse, attempting to leap over a hedge, and brought into the hall, where he lay for dead. Upon which we all rose and walked hastily to the house, where we found Ctesippus just come to himself, in the midst of half-a-dozen sun-burnt squires in frocks, and short wigs and jockey-boots. Being asked how he did, he answered it was only a broken rib. With some difficulty Crito persuaded him to lie on a bed till the chirurgeon came. These fox-hunters, having been up early at their sport, were eager for dinner, which was accordingly hastened. They passed the afternoon in a loud rustic mirth, gave proof of their religion and loyalty by the healths they drank, talked of hounds and horses, and elections and country affairs, till the chirurgeon, who had been employed about Ctesippus, desired he might be put into Crito's coach, and sent home, having refused to stay all night. Our guests being gone, we reposed ourselves after the fatigue of this tumultuous visit, and next morning assembled again at the seat on the mount. Now Lysicles, being a nice man, and a *bel esprit*, had an infinite contempt for the rough manners and conversation of fox-hunters, and could not reflect with patience that he had lost, as he called it, so many hours in their company. I flattered myself, said he, that there had been none of this species remaining among us: strange that men should be diverted with such uncouth noise and hurry, or find pleasure in the society of dogs and horses! how much more elegant are the diversions of the town! There seems, replied Euphranor, to be some resemblance between fox-hunters and free-thinkers; the former exerting their animal faculties in pursuit of game, as you gentlemen employ your intellectuals in the pursuit of truth. The kind of amusement is the same, although the object be different. *Lys.* I had rather be compared to any brute upon earth than a rational brute. *Cri.* You would then have been less displeased with my friend Pythocles, whom I have heard compare the common sort of minute philosophers, not to the hunters, but the hounds. For, said he, you shall often see among the dogs a loud babbler, with a bad nose, lead the unskilful part of the pack, who join all in his cry without following any scent of their own, any more than the herd of free-thinkers follow their own reason.

II. But Pythocles was a blunt man, and must never have known such reasoners among them as you gentlemen, who can sit so long at an argument, dispute every inch of ground, and yet know when to make a reasonable concession. *Lys.* I do not know how it comes to pass, but methinks Alciphron makes concessions for himself and me too. For my own part, I am not altogether of such a yielding temper: but yet I do not care to be singular neither. *Cri.* Truly, Alciphron, when I consider where we are got, and how far we are agreed, I conceive it probable we may agree altogether in the end. You have granted that a life of virtue is upon all accounts eligible, as most conducive both to the general and particular good of mankind: and you allow, that the beauty of virtue alone is not a sufficient motive with mankind to the practice of it. This led you to acknowledge, that the belief of a God would be very useful in the world; and that consequently you should be disposed to admit any reasonable proof of his being: which point hath been proved, and you have admitted the proof. If then we admit a divinity, why not divine worship? and if worship, why not religion to teach this worship? and if a religion, why not the Christian, if a better cannot be assigned, and it be already established by the laws of our country, and handed down to us from our forefathers? Shall we believe a God, and not pray to him for future benefits nor thank him for the past? Neither trust in his protection, nor love his goodness, nor praise his wisdom, nor adore his power? And if these things are to be done, can we do them in a way more suitable to the dignity of God or man, than is prescribed by the Christian religion? *Alc.* I am not perhaps altogether sure that religion must be absolutely bad for the public: but I cannot bear to see policy and religion walk hand in hand: I do not like to see human rights attached to the divine: I am for no *pontifex maximus*, such as in ancient or in modern Rome: no high priest, as in Judea: no royal priests, as in Egypt and Sparta: no such things as Dairos of Japan, or Lamas of Tartary.

III. I knew a late witty gentleman of our sect, who was a great admirer of the ancient Druids. He had a mortal antipathy to the present established religion, but used to say he should like well to see the Druids and their religion restored, as it anciently flourished in Gaul and Britain; for it would be right enough that there should be a number of contemplative men set apart to preserve a knowledge of arts and sciences, to educate youth, and teach men the immortality of the soul and the moral virtues. Such, said he, were the Druids of old, and I should be glad to see them once more established among us. *Cri.* How would you like, Alciphron, that priests should have power to decide all controversies, adjudge property, distribute rewards and punishments;

that all who did not acquiesce in their decrees should be excommunicated, held in abhorrence, excluded from all honours and privileges, and deprived of the common benefit of the laws; and that now and then, a number of laymen should be crammed together in a wicker idol, and burnt for an offering to their pagan gods? How should you like living under such priests and such a religion? *Alc.* Not at all. Such a situation would by no means agree with free-thinkers. *Cri.* And yet such were the Druids and such their religion, if we may trust Cæsar's account of them.* *Lys.* I am now convinced more than ever, there ought to be no such thing as an established religion of any kind. Certainly all the nations of the world have been hitherto out of their wits. Even the Athenians themselves, the wisest and freest people upon earth, had, I know not what, foolish attachment to their established church. They offered, it seems, a talent as a reward to whoever should kill Diagoras the Melian, a free-thinker of those times who derided their mysteries: and Protagoras, another of the same turn, narrowly escaped being put to death, for having wrote something that seemed to contradict their received notions of the gods. Such was the treatment our generous sect met with at Athens. And I make no doubt, but these Druids would have sacrificed many a holocaust of free-thinkers. I would not give a single farthing to exchange one religion for another. Away with all together, root and branch, or you had as good do nothing. No Druids or priests of any sort for me: I see no occasion for any of them.

IV. *Euph.* What Lysicles saith, puts me in mind of the close of our last conference, wherein it was agreed, in the following, to resume the point we were then entered upon, to wit, the use or benefit of the Christian religion, which Alciphron expected Crito should make appear. *Cri.* I am the readier to undertake this point, because I conceive it to be no difficult one, and that one great mark of the truth of Christianity is, in my mind, its tendency to do good, which seems the north star to conduct our judgment in moral matters, and in all things of a practic nature; moral or practical truths being ever connected with universal benefit. But to judge rightly of this matter, we should endeavour to act like Lysicles upon another occasion, taking into our view the sum of things, and considering principles as branched forth into consequences to the utmost extent we are able. We are not so much to regard the humour, or caprice, or imaginary distresses of a few idle men, whose conceit may be offended, though their conscience cannot be wounded; but fairly to consider the true interest of individuals as well as of human society. Now the Christian religion, considered as a fountain of light, and

* De Bello Gallico, lib. 6.

joy, and peace, as a source of faith, and hope, and charity (and that it is so will be evident to whoever takes his notion of it from the gospel), must needs be a principle of happiness and virtue. And he who sees not, that the destroying the principles of good actions must destroy good actions, sees nothing: and he who, seeing this, shall yet persist to do it, if he be not wicked, who is?

V. To me it seems the man can see neither deep nor far, who is not sensible of his own misery, sinfulness, and dependence; who doth not perceive, that this present world is not designed or adapted to make rational souls happy; who would not be glad of getting into a better state, and who would not be overjoyed to find, that the road leading thither was the love of God and man, the practising every virtue, the living reasonably while we are here upon earth, proportioning our esteem to the value of things, and so using this world as not to abuse it, for this is what Christianity requires. It neither enjoins the nastiness of the Cynic, nor the insensibility of the Stoic. Can there be a higher ambition than to overcome the world, or a wiser than to subdue ourselves, or a more comfortable doctrine than the remission of sins, or a more joyful prospect than that of having our base nature renewed and assimilated to the Deity, our being made fellow-citizens with angels and sons of God? Did ever Pythagoreans, or Platonists, or Stoics, even in idea or in wish, propose to the mind of man purer means or a nobler end? How great a share of our happiness depends upon hope! how totally is this extinguished by the minute philosophy! On the other hand, how is it cherished and raised by the gospel! Let any man who thinks in earnest but consider these things, and then say which he thinks deserveth best of mankind, he who recommends, or he who runs down Christianity? Which he thinks likelier to lead a happy life, to be a hopeful son, an honest dealer, a worthy patriot, he who sincerely believes the gospel, or he who believes not one tittle of it? He who aims at being a child of God, or he who is contented to be thought, and to be, one of Epicurus's hogs? And in fact do but scan the characters, and observe the behaviour of the common sort of men on both sides: observe and say which live most agreeably to the dictates of reason? How things should be, the reason is plain; how they are, I appeal to fact.

VI. *Alc.* It is wonderful to observe how things change appearance, as they are viewed in different lights, or by different eyes. The picture, Crito, that I form of religion is very unlike yours, when I consider how it unmans the soul, filling it with absurd reveries and slavish fears; how it extinguishes the gentle passions, inspiring a spirit of malice, and rage, and persecution: when I behold bitter resentment and unholy wrath in those very men who preach up meekness and charity to others. *Cri.* It is

very possible, that gentlemen of your sect may think religion a subject beneath their attention; but yet it seems that whoever sets up for opposing any doctrine, should know what it is he disputes against. Know then, that religion is the virtuous mean between incredulity and superstition. We do not therefore contend for superstitious follies, or for the rage of bigots. What we plead for is religion against profaneness, law against confusion, virtue against vice, the hope of a Christian against the despondency of an atheist. I will not justify bitter resentments and unholy wrath in any man, much less in a Christian, and least of all in a clergyman. But if sallies of human passion should sometimes appear even in the best, it will not surprise any one who reflects on the sarcasms and ill manners with which they are treated by the minute philosophers. For as Cicero somewhere observes, *Habet quendam aculeum contumelia, quem pati prudentes ac viri boni difficillimè possunt.* But although you might sometimes observe particular persons, professing themselves Christians, run into faulty extremes of any kind through passion and infirmity, while infidels of a more calm and dispassionate temper shall perhaps behave better. Yet these natural tendencies on either side prove nothing, either in favour of infidel principles, or against Christian. If a believer doeth evil, it is owing to the man, not to his belief. And if an infidel doeth good, it is owing to the man and not to his infidelity.

VII. *Lys.* To cut this matter short, I shall borrow an allusion to physic, which one of you made use of against our sect. It will not be denied, that the clergy pass for physicians of the soul, and that religion is a sort of medicine which they deal in and administer. If then souls in great numbers are diseased and lost, how can we think the physician skilful or his physic good? It is a common complaint, that vice increases, and men grow daily more and more wicked. If a shepherd's flock be diseased or unsound, who is to blame but the shepherd, for neglecting or not knowing how to cure them? a fig therefore for such shepherds, such physic, and such physicians, who, like other mountebanks, with great gravity and elaborate harangues put off their pills to the people, who are never the better for them. *Euph.* Nothing seems more reasonable than this remark, that men should judge of a physician, and his physic by its effect on the sick. But pray, Lysicles, would you judge of a physician by those sick who take his physic and follow his prescriptions, or by those who do not? *Lys.* Doubtless by those who do. *Euph.* What shall we say then, if great numbers refuse to take the physic, or instead of it take poison of a direct contrary nature prescribed by others, who make it their business to discredit the physician and his medicines, to hinder men from using them, and to destroy their effects by drugs of their own? Shall the physician be blamed for the miscarriage of those people? *Lys.* By no means. *Euph.* By a parity

of reason should it not follow, that the tendency of religious doctrines ought to be judged of by the effects which they produce, not upon all who hear them, but upon those only who receive or believe them? *Lys.* It seems so. *Euph.* Therefore to proceed fairly, shall we not judge of the effects of religion by the religious, of faith by believers, of Christianity by Christians?

VIII. *Lys.* But I doubt these sincere believers are very few. *Euph.* But will it not suffice to justify our principles, if in proportion to the numbers which receive them, and the degree of faith with which they are received, they produce good effects? Perhaps the number of believers are not so few as you imagine; and if they were, whose fault is that so much as of those who make it their professed endeavour to lessen that number? And who are those but the minute philosophers? *Lys.* I tell you it is owing to the clergy themselves, to the wickedness and corruption of clergymen. *Euph.* And who denies but there may be minute philosophers even among the clergy? *Cri.* In so numerous a body it is to be presumed there are men of all sorts. But notwithstanding the cruel reproaches cast upon that order by their enemies, an equal observer of men and things will, if I mistake not, be inclined to think those reproaches owing as much to other faults as those of the clergy, especially if he considers the declamatory manner of those who censure them. *Euph.* My knowledge of the world is too narrow for me to pretend to judge of the virtue and merit and liberal attainments of men in the several professions. Besides, I should not care for the odious work of comparison: but I may venture to say, the clergy of this country where I live are by no means a disgrace to it; on the contrary, the people seem much the better for their example and doctrine. But supposing the clergy to be (what all men certainly are) sinners and faulty; supposing you might spy out here and there among them even great crimes and vices, what can you conclude against the profession itself from its unworthy professors, any more than from the pride, pedantry, and bad lives of some philosophers against philosophy, or of lawyers against law?

IX. It is certainly right to judge of principles from their effects, but then we must know them to be effects of those principles. It is the very method I have observed, with respect to religion and the minute philosophy. And I can honestly aver, that I never knew any man or family grow worse in proportion as they grew religious: but I have often observed that minute philosophy is the worst thing that can get into a family, the readiest way to impoverish, divide, and disgrace it. *Alc.* By the same method of tracing causes from their effects, I have made it my observation, that the love of truth, virtue, and the happiness of mankind are specious pretexts, but not the inward principles that set divines at work; else why should they affect to abuse

human reason, to disparage natural religion, to traduce the philosophers as they universally do? *Cri.* Not so universally perhaps as you imagine. A Christian, indeed, is for confining reason within its due bounds; and so is every reasonable man. If we are forbid meddling with unprofitable questions, vain philosophy, and science falsely so called, it cannot be thence inferred, that all inquiries into profitable questions, useful philosophy, and true science, are unlawful. A minute philosopher may indeed impute, and perhaps a weak brother may imagine those inferences, but men of sense will never make them. God is the common father of lights; and all knowledge really such, whether natural or revealed, is derived from the same source of light and truth. To amass together authorities upon so plain a point would be needless. It must be owned some men's attributing too much to human reason, hath, as is natural, made others attribute too little to it. But thus much is generally acknowledged, that there is a natural religion, which may be discovered and proved by the light of reason, to those who are capable of such proofs. But it must be withal acknowledged, that precepts and oracles from heaven are incomparably better suited to popular improvement and the good of society, than the reasonings of philosophers; and accordingly we do not find, that natural or rational religion ever became the popular national religion of any country.

X. *Alc.* It cannot be denied, that in all heathen countries there have been received, under the colour of religion, a world of fables and superstitious rites. But I question whether they were so absurd and of so bad influence as is vulgarly represented, since their respective legislators and magistrates must, without doubt, have thought them useful. *Cri.* It were needless to inquire into all the rites and notions of the gentile world. This hath been largely done when it was thought necessary. And whoever thinks it worth while may be easily satisfied about them. But as to the tendency and usefulness of the heathen religion in general, I beg leave to mention a remark of St. Augustine's,* who observes that the heathens in their religion had no assemblies for preaching, wherein the people were to be instructed what duties or virtues the gods required, no place or means to be taught what Persius† exhorts them to learn.

> Disciteque ô miseri, et causas cognoscite rerum,
> Quid sumus, et quidnam victuri gignimur.

Alc. This is the true spirit of the party, never to allow a grain of use or goodness to any thing out of their own pale: but we have had learned men who have done justice to the religion of the gentiles. *Cri.* We do not deny but there was something useful

* De Civitate Dei, lib. 2. † Sat. iii.

in the old religions of Rome and Greece, and some other pagan countries. On the contrary, we freely own they produced some good effects on the people: but then these good effects were owing to the truths contained in those false religions, the truer therefore the more useful. I believe you will find it a hard matter to produce any useful truth, any moral precept, any salutary principle or notion in any gentile system, either of religion or philosophy, which is not comprehended in the Christian, and either enforced by stronger motives, or supported by better authority, or carried to a higher point of perfection.

XI. *Alc.* Consequently you would have us think ourselves a finer people than the ancient Greeks or Romans. *Cri.* If by finer you mean better, perhaps we are; and if we are not, it is not owing to the Christian religion, but to the want of it. *Alc.* You say, perhaps we are. I do not pique myself on my reading: but should be very ignorant to be capable of being imposed on in so plain a point. What! compare Cicero or Brutus to an English patriot, or Seneca to one of our parsons! Then that invincible constancy and vigour of mind, that disinterested and noble virtue, that adorable public spirit you so much admire, are things in them so well known, and so different from our manners, that I know not how to excuse your *perhaps*. Euphranor, indeed, who passeth his life in this obscure corner, may possibly mistake the characters of our times, but you who know the world, how could you be guilty of such a mistake? *Cri.* O Alciphron, I would by no means detract from the noble virtue of ancient heroes: but I observe those great men were not the minute philosophers of their times; that the best principles upon which they acted are common to them with Christians, of whom it would be no difficult matter to assign many instances, in every kind of worth and virtue, public or private, equal to the most celebrated of the ancients. Though perhaps their story might not have been so well told, set off with such fine lights and colouring of style, or so vulgarly known and considered by every school-boy. But though it should be granted, that here and there a Greek or Roman genius, bred up under strict laws and severe discipline, animated to public virtue by statues, crowns, triumphal arches, and such rewards and monuments of great actions, might attain to a character and fame beyond other men, yet this will prove only, that they had more spirit and lived under a civil polity more wisely ordered in certain points than ours; which advantages of nature and civil institution will be no argument for their religion or against ours. On the contrary, it seems an invincible proof of the power and excellency of the Christian religion, that, without the help of those civil institutions and incentives to glory, it should be able to inspire a phlegmatic people with the noblest sentiments, and soften the rugged

manners of northern boors into gentleness and humanity: and that these good qualities should become national, and rise and fall in proportion to the purity of our religion, as it approaches to, or recedes from the plan laid down in the gospel.

XII. To make a right judgment of the effects of the Christian religion, let us take a survey of the prevailing notions and manners of this very country where we live, and compare them with those of our heathen predecessors. *Alc.* I have heard much of the glorious light of the gospel, and should be glad to see some effects of it in my own dear country, which, by the bye, is one of the most corrupt and profligate upon earth, notwithstanding the boasted purity of our religion. But it would look mean and diffident, to affect a comparison with the barbarous heathen, from whence we drew our original: if you would do honour to your religion, dare to make it with the most renowned heathens of antiquity. *Cri.* It is a common prejudice, to despise the present, and over-rate remote times and things. Something of this seems to enter into the judgments men make of the Greeks and Romans. For though it must be allowed, those nations produced some noble spirits and great patterns of virtue: yet upon the whole, it seems to me they were much inferior in point of real virtue and good morals, even to this corrupt and profligate nation, as you are now pleased to call it in dishonour to our religion; however you may think fit to characterize it, when you would do honour to the minute philosophy. This, I think, will be plain to any one, who shall turn off his eyes from a few shining characters, to view the general manners and customs of those people. Their insolent treatment of captives, even of the highest rank and softer sex, their unnatural exposing of their own children, their bloody gladiatorian spectacles, compared with the common notions of Englishmen, are to me a plain proof, that our minds are much softened by Christianity. Could any thing be more unjust, than the condemning a young lady to the most infamous punishment and death for the guilt of her father, or a whole family of slaves, perhaps some hundreds, for a crime committed by one? or more abominable than their bacchanals and unbridled lusts of every kind? which, notwithstanding all that has been done by minute philosophers to debauch the nation, and their successful attempts on some part of it, have not yet been matched among us, at least not in every circumstance of impudence and effrontery. While the Romans were poor, they were temperate; but, as they grew rich, they became luxurious to a degree that is hardly believed or conceived by us. It cannot be denied, the old Roman spirit was a great one. But it is as certain, there have been numberless examples of the most resolute and clear courage in Britons, and in general from a religious cause. Upon the whole, it seems an instance of the greatest

blindness and ingratitude, that we do not see and own the exceeding great benefits of Christianity, which to omit higher considerations, hath so visibly softened, polished, and embellished our manners.

XIII. *Alc.* O Crito, we are alarmed at cruelty in a foreign shape, but overlook it in a familiar one. Else how is it possible that you should not see the inhumanity of that barbarous custom of duelling, a thing avowed and tolerated, and even reputable, among us? Or that, seeing this, you should suppose our Englishmen of a more gentle disposition than the old Romans, who were altogether strangers to it? *Cri.* I will by no means make an apology for every Goth that walks the streets, with a determined purpose to murder any man who shall but spit in his face, or give him the lie. Nor do I think the Christian religion is in the least answerable for a practice so directly opposite to its precepts, and which obtains only among the idle part of the nation, your men of fashion; who, instead of law, reason, or religion, are governed by fashion. Be pleased to consider that what may be, and truly is, a most scandalous reproach to a Christian country, may be none at all to the christian religion: for the pagan encouraged men in several vices, but the Christian in none. *Alc.* Give me leave to observe, that what you now say is foreign to the purpose. For the question, at present, is not concerning the respective tendencies of the pagan and the Christian religions, but concerning our manners, as actually compared with those of ancient heathens, who I aver had no such barbarous custom as duelling. *Cri.* And I aver that, bad as this is, they had a worse; and that was poisoning. By which we have reason to think there were many more lives destroyed, than by this Gothic crime of duelling: inasmuch as it extended to all ages, sexes, and characters, and as its effects were more secret and unavoidable; and as it had more temptations, interest as well as passion, to recommend it to wicked men. And for the fact, not to waste time, I refer you to the Roman authors themselves. *Lys.* It is very true: duelling is not so general a nuisance as poisoning, nor of so base a nature. This crime, if it be a crime, is in a fair way to keep its ground in spite of the law and the gospel. The clergy never preach against it, because themselves never suffer by it: and the man of honour must not appear against the means of vindicating honour. *Cri.* Though it be remarked by some of your sect, that the clergy are not used to preach against duelling, yet I neither think the remark itself just, nor the reason assigned for it. In effect, one-half of their sermons, all that is said of charity, brotherly love, forbearance, meekness, and forgiving injuries, is directly against this wicked custom; by which the clergy themselves are so far from never suffering, that perhaps they will be found, all things considered, to suffer oftener than

other men. *Lys.* How do you make this appear? *Cri.* An observer of mankind may remark two kinds of bully, the fighting and the tame, both public nuisances, the former (who is the more dangerous animal, but by much the less common of the two) employs himself wholly and solely against the laity, while the tame species exert their talents upon the clergy. The qualities constituent of this tame bully are natural rudeness joined with a delicate sense of danger. For, you must know, the force of inbred insolence and ill manners is not diminished, though it acquire a new determination, from the fashionable custom of calling men to account for their behaviour. Hence you may often see one of these tame bullies ready to burst with pride and ill-humour, which he dares not vent till a parson has come in the way to his relief. And the man of raillery, who would as soon bite off his tongue, as break a jest on the profession of arms in the presence of a military man, shall instantly brighten up, and assume a familiar air with religion and the church before ecclesiastics. Dorcon, who passeth for a poltroon and stupid in all other company, and really is so, when he is got among clergymen, affects a quite opposite character. And many Dorcons there are which owe their wit and courage to this passive order.

XIV. *Alc.* But to return to the point in hand, can you deny the old Romans were as famous for justice and integrity as men in these days for the contrary qualities? *Cri.* The character of the Romans is not to be taken from the sentiments of Tully, or Cato's actions, or a shining passage here and there in their history, but from the prevailing tenor of their lives and notions. Now if they and our modern Britons are weighed in this same equal balance, you will, if I mistake not, appear to have been prejudiced in favour of the old Romans against your own country, probably because it professeth Christianity. Whatever instances of fraud or injustice may be seen in Christians carry their own censure with them, in the care that is taken to conceal them, and the shame that attends their discovery. There is, even at this day, a sort of modesty in all our public councils and deliberations. And I believe the boldest of our minute philosophers would hardly undertake, in a popular assembly, to propose any thing parallel to the rape of the Sabines, the most unjust usage of Lucius Tarquinius Collatinus, or the ungrateful treatment of Camillus, which, as a learned father observes, were instances of iniquity agreed to by the public body of the Romans. And if Rome in her early days were capable of such flagrant injustice, it is most certain she did not mend her manners as she grew great in wealth and empire, having produced monsters in every kind of wickedness, as far exceeding other men as they surpassed them in power. I freely acknowledge, the Christian religion hath not had the same influence upon the nation, that it would

in case it had been always professed in its purity, and cordially believed by all men. But I will venture to say, that if you take the Roman history from one end to the other, and impartially compare it with our own, you will neither find them so good, nor your countrymen so bad as you imagine. On the contrary, an indifferent eye may, I verily think, perceive a vein of charity and justice, the effect of Christian principles, run through the latter; which, though not equally discernible in all parts, yet discloseth itself sufficiently to make a wide difference upon the whole in spite of the general appetites and passions of human nature, as well as of the particular hardness and roughness of the block out of which we were hewn. And it is observable (what the Roman authors themselves do often suggest) that even their virtues and magnanimous actions rose and fell with a sense of providence and a future state, and a philosophy the nearest to the Christian religion.

XV. Crito having spoke thus, paused. But Alciphron, addressing himself to Euphranor and me, said, It is natural for men, according to their several educations and prejudices, to form contrary judgments upon the same things, which they view in very different lights. Crito, for instance, imagines that none but salutary effects proceed from religion: on the other hand, if you appeal to the general experience and observation of other men, you shall find it grown into a proverb that religion is the root of evil.

Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum.

And this not only among Epicureans or other ancient heathens, but among moderns speaking of the Christian religion. Now methinks it is unreasonable to oppose against the general concurring opinion of the world, the observation of a particular person, or particular set of zealots, whose prejudice sticks close to them, and ever mixeth with their judgment; and who read, collect, and observe with an eye not to discover the truth, but to defend their prejudice. *Cri.* Though I cannot think with Alciphron, yet I must own I admire his address and dexterity in argument. Popular and general opinion is by him represented, on certain occasions, to be a sure mark of error. But when it serves his ends that it should seem otherwise, he can as easily make it a character of truth. But it will by no means follow, that a profane proverb used by the friends and admired authors of a minute philosopher, must therefore be a received opinion, much less a truth grounded on the experience and observation of mankind. Sadness may spring from guilt or superstition, and rage from bigotry; but darkness might as well be supposed the natural effect of sunshine, as sullen and furious passions to proceed from the glad tidings and divine precepts of the gospel.

What is the sum and substance, scope and end, of Christ's religion, but the love of God and man? to which all other points and duties are relative and subordinate, as parts or means, as signs, principles, motives, or effects. Now I would fain know, how it is possible for evil or wickedness of any kind to spring from such a source? I will not pretend, there are no evil qualities in Christians, nor good in minute philosophers. But this I affirm, that whatever evil is in us, our principles certainly lead to good; and whatever good there may be in you, it is most certain your principles lead to evil.

XVI. *Alc.* It must be owned there is a fair outside, and many plausible things may be said, for the Christian religion taken simply as it lies in the gospel. But it is the observation of one of our great writers, that the first Christian preachers very cunningly began with the fairest face and the best moral doctrines in the world. It was all love, charity, meekness, patience, and so forth. But when by this means they had drawn over the world and got power, they soon changed their appearance, and showed cruelty, ambition, avarice, and every bad quality. *Cri.* That is to say, some men very cunningly preached and underwent a world of hardships, and laid down their lives to propagate the best principles and the best morals, to the end that others some centuries after might reap the benefit of bad ones. Whoever may be cunning, there is not much cunning in the maker of this observation. *Alc.* And yet ever since this religion hath appeared in the world, we have had eternal feuds, factions, massacres, and wars, the very reverse of that hymn with which it is introduced in the gospel: Glory be to God on high, on earth peace, good-will towards men. *Cri.* This I will not deny. I will even own that the gospel and the Christian religion have been often the pretexts for these evils; but it will not thence follow they were the cause. On the contrary it is plain they could not be the real, proper cause of these evils, because a rebellious, proud, revengeful, quarrelsome spirit is directly opposite to the whole tenor and most express precepts of Christianity: a point so clear that I shall not prove it. And secondly, because all those evils you mention were as frequent, nay much more frequent, before the Christian religion was known in the world. They are the common product of the passions and vices of mankind, which are sometimes covered with the mask of religion by wicked men, having the form of godliness without the power of it. This truth seems so plain, that I am surprised how any man of sense, knowledge, and candour can make a doubt of it.

XVII. Take but a view of heathen Rome; what a scene is there of faction and fury and civil rage! Let any man consider the perpetual feuds between the patricians and plebeians, the bloody and inhuman factions of Marius and Sylla, Cinna and

Octavius, and the vast havoc of mankind, during the two famous triumvirates. To be short, let any man of common candour and common sense but cast an eye from one end to the other of the Roman story, and behold that long scene of seditions, murders, massacres, proscriptions, and desolations of every kind, enhanced by every cruel circumstance of rage, rapine, and revenge, and then say, whether those evils were introduced into the world with the Christian religion, or whether they are not less frequent now than before? *Alc.* The ancient Romans, it must be owned, had a high and fierce spirit, which produced eager contentions and very bloody catastrophes. The Greeks, on the other hand, were a polite and gentle sort of men, softened by arts and philosophy. It is impossible to think of the little states and cities of Greece, without wishing to have lived in those times, without admiring their policy and envying their happiness. *Cri.* Men are apt to consider the dark sides of what they possess, and the bright ones of things out of their reach. A fine climate, elegant taste, polite amusements, love of liberty, and most ingenious inventive spirit for arts and sciences were indisputable prerogatives of ancient Greece. But as for peace and quietness, gentleness and humanity, I think we have plainly the advantage: for those envied cities composed of gentle Greeks were not without their factions, which persecuted each other with such treachery, rage, and malice, that in respect of them our factious folk are mere lambs. To be convinced of this truth, you need only look into Thucydides,* where you will find those cities in general involved in such bitter factions, as for fellow-citizens without the formalities of war to murder one another, even in their senate-houses and their temples, no regard being had to merit, rank, obligation, or nearness of blood. And if human nature boiled up to so vehement a pitch in the politest people, what wonder that savage nations should scalp, roast, torture, and destroy each other, as they are known to do? It is therefore plain, that without religion there would not be wanting pretexts for quarrels and debates; all which can very easily be accounted for by the natural infirmities and corruption of men. It would not perhaps be so easy to account for the blindness of those, who impute the most hellish effects to the most divine principle, if they could be supposed in earnest, and to have considered the point. One may daily see ignorant and prejudiced men make the most absurd blunders: but that free-thinkers, divers to the bottom of things, fair inquirers, and openers of eyes, should be capable of such a gross mistake, is what one would not expect.

XVIII. *Alc.* The rest of mankind we could more easily give up: but as for the Greeks, men of the most refined genius express an high esteem of them, not only on account of those

* Thucyd. lib. 3.

qualities which you think fit to allow them, but also for their virtues. *Cri.* I shall not take upon me to say how far some men may be prejudiced against their country, or whether others may not be prejudiced in favour of it. But upon the fullest and most equal observation that I am able to make, it is my opinion, that, if by virtue is meant truth, justice, gratitude, there is incomparably more virtue now at this day in England, than at any time could be found in ancient Greece. Thus much will be allowed, that we know few countries, if any, where men of eminent worth, and famous for deserving well of the public, met with harder fate, and were more ungratefully treated, than in the most polite and learned of the Grecian states. Though Socrates, it must be owned, would not allow that those statesmen, by adorning the city, augmenting the fleet, or extending the commerce of Athens, deserved well of their country; or could with justice complain of the ungrateful returns made by their fellow-citizens, whom, while they were in power, they had taken no care to make better men, by improving and cultivating their minds with the principles of virtue, which if they had done, they needed not to have feared their ingratitude. If I were to declare my opinion, what gave the chief advantage to Greeks and Romans and other nations, which have made the greatest figure in the world, I should be apt to think it was a peculiar reverence for their respective laws and institutions, which inspired them with steadiness and courage, and that hearty, generous love of their country, by which they did not merely understand a certain language or tribe of men, much less a particular spot of earth, but included a certain system of manners, customs, notions, rites, and laws, civil and religious. *Alc.* Oh! I perceive your drift; you would have us reverence the laws and religious institutions of our country. But herein we beg to be excused, if we do not think fit to imitate the Greeks, or to be governed by any authority whatsoever. But to return: as for wars and factions, I grant they ever were and ever will be in the world upon some pretext or other, as long as men are men.

XIX. But there is a sort of war and warriors peculiar to Christendom, which the heathens had no notion of: I mean disputes in theology and polemical divines, which the world hath been wonderfully pestered with: these teachers of peace, meekness, concord, and what not! if you take their word for it: but if you cast an eye upon their practice, you find them to have been in all ages the most contentious, quarrelsome, disagreeing crew that ever appeared upon earth. To observe the skill and sophistry, the zeal and eagerness, with which those barbarians, the school divines, split hairs and contest about chimeras, gives me more indignation, as being more absurd and a greater scandal to human reason, than all the ambitious intrigues, cabals, and

politics, of the court of Rome. *Cri.* If divines are quarrelsome, that is not so far forth as divine, but as undivine and unchristian. Justice is a good thing, and the art of healing is excellent; nevertheless, in the administering of justice or physic, men may be wronged or poisoned. But as wrong cannot be justice, or the effect of justice, so poison cannot be medicine or the effect of medicine, so neither can pride or strife be religion or the effect of religion. Having premised this, I acknowledge, you may often see hot-headed bigots engage themselves in religious as well as civil parties, without being of credit or service to either. And as for the schoolmen in particular, I do not in the least think the Christian religion concerned in the defence of them, their tenets, or their method of handling them: but whatever futility there may be in their notions, or inelegancy in their language, in pure justice to truth one must own, they neither banter, nor rail, nor declaim in their writings, and are so far from showing fury or passion, that perhaps an impartial judge will think, the minute philosophers are by no means to be compared with them for keeping close to the point, or for temper and good manners. But after all, if men are puzzled, wrangle, talk nonsense, and quarrel about religion, so they do about law, physic, politics, and every thing else of moment. I ask, whether in these professions or in any other, where men have refined and abstracted, they do not run into disputes, chicane, nonsense, and contradictions, as well as in divinity? And yet this doth not hinder, but there may be many excellent rules, and just notions, and useful truths in all those professions. In all disputes human passions too often mix themselves, in proportion as the subject is conceived to be more or less important. But we ought not to confound the cause of men with the cause of God, or make human follies an objection to divine truths. It is easy to distinguish what looks like wisdom from above, and what proceeds from the passion and weakness of men. This is so clear a point, that one would be tempted to think, the not doing it was an effect, not of ignorance, but of something worse.

XX. The conduct we object to minute philosophers is a natural consequence of their principles. Whatsoever they can reproach us with is an effect, not of our principles, but of human passion and frailty. *Alc.* This is admirable. So we must no longer object to Christians, the absurd contentions of councils, the cruelty of inquisitions, the ambition and usurpations of churchmen. *Cri.* You may object them to Christians but not to Christianity. If the divine author of our religion and his disciples have sown a good seed; and together with this good seed, the enemies of his gospel (among whom are to be reckoned the minute philosophers of all ages) have sown bad seeds, whence spring tares and thistles; is it not evident, these bad weeds can-

not be imputed to the good seed, or to those who sowed it? Whatever you do or can object against ecclesiastical tyranny, usurpation, or sophistry, may, without any blemish or disadvantage to religion, be acknowledged by all true Christians; provided still that you impute those wicked effects to their true cause, not blaming any principles or persons for them, but those that really produce or justify them. Certainly, as the interests of Christianity are not to be supported by unchristian methods, whenever these are made use of, it must be supposed there is some other latent principle which sets them at work. If the very court of Rome hath been known, from motives of policy, to oppose settling the inquisition in a kingdom, where the secular power hath endeavoured to introduce it in spite of that court:* we may well suppose, that elsewhere factions of state, and political views of princes, have given birth to transactions seemingly religious, wherein at bottom neither religion, nor church, nor churchmen, were at all considered. As no man of common sense and honesty will engage in a general defence of ecclesiastics, so I think no man of common candour can condemn them in general. Would you think it reasonable, to blame all statesmen, lawyers, or soldiers, for the faults committed by those of their profession, though in other times, or in other countries, and influenced by other maxims and other discipline? And if not, why do you measure with one rule to the clergy, and another to the laity? Surely the best reason that can be given for this is prejudice. Should any man rake together all the mischiefs that have been committed, in all ages and nations, by soldiers and lawyers, you would, I suppose, conclude from thence, not that the state should be deprived of those useful professions, but only that their exorbitances should be guarded against and punished. If you took the same equitable course with the clergy, there would indeed be less to be said against you; but then you would have much less to say. This plain, obvious consideration, if every one who read considered, would lessen the credit of your declaimers. *Alc.* But when all is said that can be said, it must move a man's indignation to see reasonable creatures, under the notion of study and learning, employed in reading and writing so many voluminous tracts *de lanâ caprinâ*. *Cri.* I shall not undertake the vindication of theological writings, a general defence being as needless as a general charge is groundless. Only let them speak for themselves, and let no man condemn them upon the word of a minute philosopher. But we will imagine the very worst, and suppose a wrangling pedant in divinity disputes, and ruminates, and writes upon a refined point, as useless and unintelligible as you please. Suppose this same person bred

* P. Paolo Istoria dell' Inquisizione, p. 42.

a layman, might he not have employed himself in tricking bargains, vexatious law-suits, factions, seditions, and such like amusements, with much more prejudice to the public? Suffer then curious wits to spin cobwebs; where is the hurt? *Alc.* The mischief is, what men want in light they commonly make up in heat: zeal and ill nature being weapons constantly exerted by the partisans, as well as champions, on either side: and those perhaps not mean pedants or book-worms. You shall often see even the learned and eminent divine lay himself out in explaining things inexplicable, or contend for a barren point of theory, as if his life, liberty, or fortune were at stake. *Cri.* No doubt all points in divinity are not of equal moment. Some may be too fine spun, and others have more stress laid on them than they deserve. Be the subject what it will, you shall often observe that a point, by being controverted, singled out, examined, and nearly inspected, groweth considerable to the same eye, that, perhaps, would have overlooked it in a large and comprehensive view. Nor is it an uncommon thing, to behold ignorance and zeal united in men, who are born with a spirit of party, though the church or religion have in truth but small share in it. Nothing is easier than to make a *caricatura* (as the painters call it) of any profession upon earth: but at bottom, there will be found nothing so strange in all this charge upon the clergy, as the partiality of those who censure them, in supposing the common defects of mankind peculiar to their order, or the effect of religious principles. *Alc.* Other folks may dispute or squabble as they please, and nobody mind them; but it seems, these venerable squabbles of the clergy pass for learning, and interest mankind. To use the words of the most ingenious characterizer of our times, "A ring is made, and readers gather in abundance. Every one takes party and encourages his own side. This shall be my champion! This man for my money! Well hit on our side! Again a good stroke! There he was even with him! Have at him the next bout! excellent sport!"* *Cri.* Methinks I trace the man of quality and breeding in this delicate satire, which so politely ridicules those arguments, answers, defences, and replications which the press groans under. *Alc.* To the infinite waste of time and paper, and all the while nobody is one whit the wiser. And who indeed can be the wiser for reading books upon subjects quite out of the way, incomprehensible, and most wretchedly written? What man of sense or breeding would not abhor the infection of prolix pulpit eloquence, or of that dry, formal, pedantic, stiff, and clumsy style which smells of the lamp and the college.

XXI. They who have the weakness to reverence the univer-

* Characteristics, vol. iii. c. 2.

sities as seats of learning, must needs think this a strange reproach; but it is a very just one. For the most ingenious men are now agreed, that they are only nurseries of prejudice, corruption, barbarism, and pedantry. *Lys.* For my part, I find no fault with universities. All I know is, that I had the spending three hundred pounds a year in one of them, and think it the cheerfullest time of my life. As for their books and style I had not leisure to mind them. *Cri.* Whoever has a mind to weed will never want work; and he that shall pick out bad books on every subject will soon fill his library. I do not know what theological writings Alciphron and his friends may be conversant in; but I will venture to say, one may find among our English divines many writers, who for compass of learning, weight of matter, strength of argument, and purity of style, are not inferior to any in our language. It is not my design to apologize for the universities: whatever is amiss in them (and what is there perfect among men?) I heartily wish amended. But I dare affirm, because I know it to be true, that any impartial observer, although they should not come up to what in theory he might wish or imagine, will nevertheless find them much superior to those that in fact are to be found in other countries, and far beyond the mean picture that is drawn of them by minute philosophers. It is natural for those to rail most at places of education, who have profited least by them. Weak and fond parents will also readily impute to a wrong cause, those corruptions themselves have occasioned, by allowing their children more money than they knew how to spend innocently. And too often a gentleman who has been idle at the college, and kept idle company, will judge of a whole university from his own cabal. *Alc.* Crito mistakes the point. I vouch the authority, not of a dunce, or a rake, or absurd parent, but of the most consummate critic this age has produced. This great man characterizeth men of the church and universities with the finest touches and most masterly pencil. What do you think he calls them? *Euph.* What? *Alc.* Why, the black tribe, magicians, formalists, pedants, bearded boys, and, having sufficiently derided and exploded them and their mean, ungenteel learning, he sets most admirable models of his own for good writing: and it must be acknowledged they are the finest things in our language; as I could easily convince you, for I am never without something of that noble writer about me. *Euph.* He is then a noble writer? *Alc.* I tell you he is a nobleman. *Euph.* But a nobleman who writes is one thing, and a noble writer another. *Alc.* Both characters are coincident, as you may see.

XXII. Upon which Alciphron pulled a treatise out of his pocket, entitled A Soliloquy, or Advice to an Author. Would you behold, said he, looking round upon the company, a noble speci-

men of fine writing; do but dip into this book: which Crito opening, read verbatim as follows.*

"Where then are the pleasures which ambition promises
And love affords? How is the gay world enjoyed?
Or are those to be esteemed no pleasures
Which are lost by dulness and inaction?
But indolence is the highest pleasure.
To live and not to feel! To feel no trouble.
What good then? Life itself. And is
This properly to live? is sleeping life?
Is this what I should study to prolong?
Here the
Fantastic tribe itself seem scandalized.
A civil war begins: the major part
Of the capricious dames do range themselves
On reason's side,
And declare against the languid siren.
Ambition blushes at the offered sweet.
Conceit and vanity take superior airs.
Even luxury herself in her polite
And elegant humour reproves the apostate
Sister,
And marks her as an alien to true pleasure.
Away thou
Drowsy phantom! haunt me no more; for I
Have learned from better than thy sisterhood
That life and happiness consist in action
And employment.
But here a busy form solicits us,
Active, industrious, watchful, and despising
Pains, and labour. She wears the serious
Countenance of virtue, but with features
Of anxiety and disquiet.
What is it she mutters? What looks she on with
Such admiration and astonishment?
Bags! coffers! heaps of shining metal! What?
For the service of luxury? For her
These preparations? Art thou then her friend,
Grave fancy! Is it for her thou toilest?
No, but for provision against want.
But luxury apart, tell me now,
Hast thou not already a competence?
It is good to be secure against the fear
Of starving. Is there then no death but this?
No other passage out of life? Are other doors
Secured if this be barred? Say avarice!
Thou emptiest of phantoms, is it not vile
Cowardice thou servest? what further have I then
To do with thee, thou doubly vile dependant,
When once I have dismissed thy patroness,
And despised her threats?
Thus I contend with fancy and opinion."

Euphranor, having heard thus far, cried out: What! will you never have done with your poetry? another time may serve: but why should we break off our conference to read a play? You are mistaken, it is no play nor poetry, replied Alciphron, but a

* Part iii. sect. ii.

famous modern critic moralizing in prose. You must know this great man hath (to use his own words) revealed a grand *arcanum* to the world, having instructed mankind in what he calls *mirror-writing, self-discoursing practice, and author practice*, and showed "that by virtue of an intimate recess, we may discover a certain duplicity of soul, and divide our self into two parties, or (as he varies the phrase) practically form the dual number." In consequence whereof, he hath found out that a man may argue with himself, and not only with himself, but also with notions, sentiments, and vices, which by a marvellous prosopopœia he converts into so many ladies, and so converted, he confutes and confounds them in a divine strain. Can any thing be finer, bolder, or more sublime? *Euph.* It is very wonderful. I thought indeed you had been reading a piece of a tragedy. Is this he who despiseth our universities, and sets up for reforming the style and taste of the age? *Alc.* The very same. This is the admired critic of our times. Nothing can stand the test of his correct judgment, which is equally severe to poets and parsons. "The British muses," saith this great man, "lisp as in their cradles: and their stammering tongues, which nothing but youth and rawness can excuse, have hitherto spoken in wretched pun and quibble. Our dramatic Shakespeare, our Fletcher, Johnson, and our epic Milton preserve this style. And, according to him, even our later authors, aiming at a false sublime, entertain our raw fancy and unpractised ear, which has not yet had leisure to form itself, and become truly musical." *Euph.* Pray what effect may the lessons of this great man, in whose eyes our learned professors are but bearded boys, and our most celebrated wits but wretched punsters, have had upon the public? Hath he rubbed off the college rust, cured the rudeness and rawness of our authors, and reduced them to his own Attic standard? Do they aspire to his true sublime, or imitate his chaste, unaffected style? *Alc.* Doubtless the taste of the age is much mended: in proof whereof his writings are universally admired. When our author published this treatise, he foresaw the public taste would improve apace; that arts and letters would grow to great perfection; that there would be a happy birth of genius: of all which things he spoke, as he saith himself, in a prophetic style. *Cri.* And yet notwithstanding the prophetical predictions of this critic, I do not find any science that throve among us of late, so much as the minute philosophy. In this kind, it must be confessed, we have had many notable productions. But whether they are such masterpieces for good writing, I leave to be determined by their readers.

XXIII. In the mean time, I must beg to be excused, if I cannot believe your great man on his bare word, when he would have us think, that ignorance and ill taste are owing to the Christian religion or the clergy; it being my sincere opinion, that what-

ever learning or knowledge we have among us, is derived from that order. If those, who are so sagacious at discovering a mote in other eyes, would but purge their own, I believe they might easily see this truth. For what but religion could kindle and preserve a spirit towards learning, in such a northern, rough people? Greece produced men of active and subtile genius. The public conventions and emulations of their cities forwarded that genius; and their natural curiosity was amused and excited by learned conversations, in their public walks and gardens and porticos. Our genius leads to amusements of a grosser kind: we breathe a grosser and a colder air: and that curiosity which was general in the Athenians, and the gratifying of which was their chief recreation, is among our people of fashion treated like affectation, and as such banished from polite assemblies and places of resort; and without doubt would in a little time be banished the country, if it were not for the great reservoirs of learning, where those formalists, pedants, and bearded boys, as your profound critic calls them, are maintained by the liberality and piety of our predecessors. For it is as evident that religion was the cause of those seminaries, as it is that they are the cause or source of all the learning and taste which is to be found, even in those very men who are the declared enemies of our religion and public foundations. Every one, who knows any thing, knows we are indebted for our learning to the Greek and Latin tongues. This those severe censors will readily grant. Perhaps they may not be so ready to grant, what all men must see, that we are indebted for those tongues to our religion. What else could have made foreign and dead languages in such request among us? What could have kept in being and handed them down to our times, through so many dark ages in which the world was wasted and disfigured by wars and violence? What, but a regard to the holy scriptures, and theological writings of the fathers and doctors of the church? And in fact, do we not find that the learning of those times was solely in the hands of ecclesiastics, that they alone lighted the lamp in succession one from another, and transmitted it down to after-ages; and that ancient books were collected and preserved in their colleges and seminaries, when all love and remembrance of polite arts and studies was extinguished among the laity, whose ambition entirely turned to arms?

XXIV. *Alc.* There is, I must needs say, one sort of learning undoubtedly of Christian original, and peculiar to the universities where our youth spend several years in acquiring that mysterious jargon of scholasticism; than which there could never have been contrived a more effectual method to perplex and confound human understanding. It is true, gentlemen are untaught by the world what they have been taught at the college: but then their time is doubly lost. *Cri.* But what if this scholastic learning was not

of Christian but of Mahometan original, being derived from the Arabs? And what if this grievance of gentlemen's spending several years in learning and unlearning this jargon, be all grimace and a specimen only of the truth and candour of certain minute philosophers, who raise great invectives from slight occasions, and judge too often without inquiring? Surely it would be no such deplorable loss of time, if a young gentlemen spent a few months upon that so much despised and decried art of logic, a surfeit of which is by no means the prevailing nuisance of this age. It is one thing to waste one's time in learning and unlearning the barbarous terms, wiredrawn distinctions, and prolix sophistry of the schoolmen, and another to attain some exactness in defining and arguing: things perhaps not altogether beneath the dignity even of a minute philosopher. There was indeed a time, when logic was considered as its own object: and that art of reasoning, instead of being transferred to things, turned altogether upon words and abstractions: which produced a sort of leprosy in all parts of knowledge, corrupting and converting them into hollow, verbal disputations in a most impure dialect. But those times are past; and that, which had been cultivated as the principal learning for some ages, is now considered in another light, and by no means makes that figure in the universities, or bears that part in the studies of young gentlemen educated there, which is pretended by those admirable reformers of religion and learning, the minute philosophers.

XXV. But who were they that encouraged and produced the restoration of arts and polite learning? What share had the minute philosophers in this affair? Matthias Corvinus, king of Hungary, Alphonsus, king of Naples, Cosmus de Medicis, Picus of Mirandula, and other princes and great men, famous for learning themselves, and for encouraging it in others with a munificent liberality, were neither Turks, nor gentiles, nor minute philosophers. Who was it that transplanted and revived the Greek language and authors, and with them all polite arts and literature in the west? Was it not chiefly Bessarion, a cardinal, Marcus Musurus, an archbishop, Theodore Beza, a private clergyman? Has there been a greater and more renowned patron and restorer of elegant studies in every kind, since the days of Augustus Cæsar, than Leo the tenth, pope of Rome? Did any writers approach the purity of the classics nearer than the cardinals Bembus and Sadoletus, or than the bishops Jovius and Vida? not to mention an endless number of ingenious ecclesiastics, who flourished on the other side of the Alps in the golden age (as the Italians call it) of Leo the tenth, and wrote, both in their own language and the Latin, after the best models of antiquity. It is true, this first recovery of learning preceded the reformation, and lighted the way to it: but the religious controversies, which

ensued, did wonderfully propagate and improve it in all parts of Christendom. And surely, the church of England is, at least, as well calculated for the encouragement of learning as that of Rome. Experience confirms this observation; and I believe the minute philosophers will not be so partial to Rome as to deny it. *Alc.* It is impossible your account of learning beyond the Alps should be true. The noble critic in my hands, having complimented the French, to whom he allows some good authors, asserts of other foreigners, particularly the Italians, "that they may be reckoned no better than the corrupters of true learning and erudition." *Cri.* With some sorts of critics, dogmatical censures and conclusions are not always the result of perfect knowledge or exact inquiry: and if they harangue upon taste, truth of art, a just piece, grace of style, Attic elegance, and such topics, they are to be understood only as those that would fain talk themselves into reputation for courage. To hear Thrasymachus speak of resentment, duels, and point of honour, one would think him ready to burst with valour. *Lys.* Whatever merit this writer may have as a demolisher, I always thought he had very little as a builder. It is natural for careless writers to run into faults they never think of; but for an exact and severe critic to shoot his bolt at random, is unpardonable. If he, who professes at every turn a high esteem for polite writing, should yet despise those who most excel in it, one would be tempted to suspect his taste. But if the very man, who of all men talks most about art, and taste, and critical skill, and would be thought to have most considered those points, should often deviate from his own rules, into the false sublime or the *mauvaise plaisanterie:* what reasonable man would follow the taste and judgment of such a guide, or be seduced to climb the steep ascent, or tread in the rugged paths of virtue on his recommendation?

XXVI. *Alc.* But to return, methinks Crito makes no compliment to the genius of his country, in supposing that Englishmen might not have wrought out of themselves all art and science and good taste, without being beholden to church, or universities, or ancient languages. *Cri.* What might have been is only conjecture. What has been, it is not difficult to know. That there is a vein in Britain of as rich an ore as ever was in any country, I will not deny; but it lies deep, and will cost pains to come at: and extrordinary pains require an extraordinary motive. As for what lies next the surface, it seems but indifferent, being neither so good nor in such plenty as in some other countries. It was the comparison of an ingenious Florentine, that the celebrated poems of Tasso and Ariosto are like two gardens, the one of cucumbers, the other of melons. In the one you shall find few bad, but the best are not a very good fruit, in the other much the greater part are good for nothing, but those

that are good are excellent. Perhaps the same comparison may hold, between the English and some of their neighbours. *Alc.* But suppose we should grant that the Christian religion and its seminaries might have been of use, in preserving or retrieving polite arts and letters; what then? Will you make this an argument of its truth? *Cri.* I will make it an argument of prejudice and ingratitude in those minute philosophers, who object darkness, ignorance, and rudeness, as an effect of that very thing, which above all others hath enlightened and civilized and embellished their country: which is as truly indebted to it for arts and sciences (which nothing but religion was ever known to have planted in such a latitude) as for that general sense of virtue and humanity, and the belief of a providence and future state, which all the argumentation of minute philosophers hath not yet been able to abolish.

XXVII. *Alc.* It is strange you should still persist to argue, as if all the gentlemen of our sect were enemies to virtue, and downright atheists: though I have assured you of the contrary, and that we have among us several, who profess themselves in the interests of virtue and natural religion, and have also declared, that I myself do now argue upon that foot. *Cri.* How can you pretend to be in the interest of natural religion, and yet be professed enemies of the Christian, the only established religion which includes whatever is excellent in the natural, and which is the only means of making those precepts, duties, and notions, so called, become reverenced throughout the world? Would not he be thought weak or insincere, who should go about to persuade people, that he was much in the interests of an earthly monarch; that he loved and admired his government; when at the same time he showed himself on all occasions a most bitter enemy of those very persons and methods, which above all others contributed most to his service, and to make his dignity known and revered, his laws observed, or his dominion extended? And is not this what minute philosophers do, while they set up for advocates of God and religion, and yet do all they can to discredit Christians and their worship? It must be owned, indeed, that you argue against Christianity, as the cause of evil and wickedness in the world; but with such arguments, and in such a manner, as might equally prove the same thing of civil government, of meat and drink, of every faculty and profession, of learning, of eloquence, and even of human reason itself. After all, even those of your sect who allow themselves to be called deists, if their notions are thoroughly examined, will, I fear, be found to include little of religion in them. As for the providence of God watching over the conduct of human agents, and dispensing blessings or chastisements, the immortality of the soul, a final judgment, and future state of rewards and punishments; how

few, if any, of your free-thinkers have made it their endeavour to possess men's minds with a serious sense of those great points of natural religion! How many, on the contrary, endeavour to render the belief of them doubtful or ridiculous! *Lys.* To speak the truth, I, for my part, had never any liking to religion of any kind, either revealed or unrevealed: and I dare venture to say the same for those gentlemen of our sect that I am acquainted with, having never observed them guilty of so much meanness, as even to mention the name of God with reverence, or speak with the least regard of piety or any sort of worship. There may perhaps be found one or two formal pretenders to enthusiasm and devotion, in the way of natural religion, who laughed at Christians for publishing hymns and meditations, while they plagued the world with as bad of their own: but the sprightly men make a jest of all this. It seems to us mere pedantry. Sometimes, indeed, in good company one may hear a word dropped in commendation of honour and good nature: but the former of these, by connoisseurs, is always understood to mean nothing but fashion, as the latter is nothing but temper and constitution, which guides a man just as appetite doth a brute.

XXVIII. And after all these arguments and notions, which beget one another without end; to take the matter short, neither I nor my friends for our souls could ever comprehend, why man might not do very well, and govern himself without any religion at all, as well as a brute, which is thought the sillier creature of the two. Have brutes instincts, senses, appetites, and passions, to steer and conduct them? So have men, and reason over and above to consult upon occasion. From these premises we conclude, the road of human life is sufficiently lighted without religion. *Cri.* Brutes having but small power, limited to things present or particular, are sufficiently opposed and kept in order, by the force or faculties of other animals and the skill of man, without conscience or religion: but conscience is a necessary balance to human reason, a faculty of such mighty extent and power, especially toward mischief. Besides, other animals are, by the law of their nature, determined to one certain end or kind of being, without inclination or means either to deviate or go beyond it. But man hath in him a will and higher principle; by virtue whereof he may pursue different or even contrary ends, and either fall short of or exceed the perfection natural to his species in this world, as he is capable either, by giving up the reins to his sensual appetites, of degrading himself into the condition of brutes, or else, by well ordering and improving his mind, of being transformed into the similitude of angels. Man alone of all animals hath understanding to know his God. What availeth this knowledge unless it be to ennoble man, and raise him to an imitation and participation of the divinity? Or what

could such ennoblement avail if to end with this life? Or how can these things take effect without religion? But the points of vice and virtue, man and beast, sense and intellect, have been already at large canvassed. What! Lysicles, would you have us go back where we were three or four days ago? *Lys.* By no means: I had much rather go forward, and make an end as soon as possible. But to save trouble, give me leave to tell you once for all, that, say what you can, you shall never persuade me so many ingenious, agreeable men are in the wrong, and a pack of snarling, sour bigots in the right.

XXIX. *Cri.* O Lysicles, I neither look for religion among bigots, nor reason among libertines; each kind disgrace their several pretensions; the one owning no regard even to the plainest and most important truths, while the others exert an angry zeal for points of least concern. And surely whatever there is of silly, narrow, and uncharitable in the bigot, the same is in great measure to be imputed to the conceited ignorance, and petulant profaneness, of the libertine. And it is not at all unlikely that as libertines make bigots, so bigots should make libertines, the extreme of one party being ever observed to produce a contrary extreme of another. And although, while these adversaries draw the rope of contention, reason and religion are often called upon, yet are they perhaps very little considered or concerned in the contest. Lysicles, instead of answering Crito, turned short upon Alciphron. It was always my opinion, said he, that nothing could be sillier than to think of destroying Christianity, by crying up natural religion. Whoever thinks highly of the one can never, with a consistency, think meanly of the other; it being very evident that natural religion, without revealed, never was and never can be established or received any where but in the brains of a few idle speculative men. I was aware what your concessions would come to. The belief of God, virtue, a future state, and such fine notions, are, as every one may see with half an eye, the very basis and corner-stone of the Christian religion. Lay but this foundation for them to build on, and you shall soon see what superstructures our men of divinity will raise from it. The truth and importance of those points once admitted, a man need be no conjurer to prove, upon that principle, the excellency and usefulness of the Christian religion: and then to be sure there must be priests to teach and propagate this useful religion. And if priests, a regular subordination without doubt in this worthy society, and a provision for their maintenance, such as may enable them to perform all their rites and ceremonies with decency, and keep their sacred character above contempt. And the plain consequence of all this is a confederacy between the prince and the priesthood to subdue the people: so we have let in at once upon us a long train of eccle-

siastical evils, priestcraft, hierarchy, inquisition. We have lost our liberty and property, and put the nation to vast expense, only to purchase bridles and saddles for their own backs.

XXX. This being spoke with some sharpness of tone, and an upbraiding air, touched Alciphron to the quick, who replied nothing, but showed confusion in his looks. Crito, smiling, looked at Euphranor and me, then, casting an eye on the two philosophers, spoke as follows: if I may be admitted to interpose good offices, for preventing a rupture between old friends and brethren in opinion, I would observe, that in this charge of Lysicles there is something right and something wrong. It seems right to assert as he doth, that the real belief of natural religion will lead a man to approve of revealed: but it is as wrong to assert, that inquisitions, tyranny, and ruin must follow from thence. Your free-thinkers, without offence be it said, seem to mistake their talent. They imagine strongly, but reason weakly; mighty at exaggeration, and jejune in argument! Can no method be found to relieve them from the terror of that fierce and bloody animal, an English parson? Will it not suffice to pare his talons without chopping off his fingers? Then they are such wonderful patriots for liberty and property! When I hear these two words in the mouth of a minute philosopher, I am put in mind of the Teste di Ferro at Rome. His holiness, it seems, not having power to assign pensions on Spanish benefices to any but natives of Spain, always keeps at Rome two Spaniards, called Teste di Ferro, who have the name of all such pensions but not the profit, which goes to Italians. As we may see every day, both things and notions placed to the account of liberty and property, which in reality neither have nor are meant to have any share in them. What! is it impossible for a man to be a Christian but he must be a slave; or a clergyman, but he must have the principles of an inquisitor? I am far from screening and justifying appetite of domination or tyrannical power in ecclesiastics. Some, who have been guilty in that respect, have sorely paid for it, and it is to be hoped they always will. But having laid the fury and folly of the ambitious prelate, is it not time to look about and spy whether, on the other hand, some evil may not possibly accrue to the state, from the overflowing zeal of an independent whig? This I may affirm, without being at any pains to prove it, that the worst tyranny this nation ever felt was from the hands of patriots of that stamp.

XXXI. *Lys.* I don't know. Tyranny is a harsh word, and sometimes misapplied. When spirited men of independent maxims create a ferment, or make a change in the state: he that loseth is apt to consider things in one light, and he that wins in another. In the meantime this is certainly good policy, that we should be frugal of our money, and reserve it for better uses

than to expend on the church and religion. *Cri.* Surely the old apologue of the belly and members need not be repeated to such knowing men. It should seem as needless to observe, that all other states, which ever made any figure in the world for wisdom and politeness, have thought learning deserved encouragement as well as the sword; that grants for religious uses were as fitting as for knights' service; and foundations for propagating piety, as necessary to the public welfare and defence, as either civil or military establishments. But I ask who are at this expense, and what is this expense so much complained of? *Lys.* As if you had never heard of church lands and tithes. *Cri.* But I would fain know, how they can be charged as an expense, either upon the nation or private men. Where nothing is exported the nation loseth nothing: and it is all one to the public, whether money circulates at home through the hands of a vicar or a squire. Then as for private men, who, for want of thought, are full of complaint about the payment of tithes; can any man justly complain of it as a tax, that he pays what never belonged to him? The tenant rents his farm with this condition, and pays his landlord proportionably less than if his farm had been exempt from it: so he loseth nothing; it being all one to him whether he pays his pastor or his landlord. The landlord cannot complain that he has not what he hath no right to, either by grant, purchase, or inheritance. This is the case of tithes; and as for the church lands, he surely can be no free-thinker, nor any thinker at all, who doth not see that no man, whether noble, gentle, or plebeian, hath any sort of right or claim to them, which he may not with equal justice pretend to all the lands in the kingdom. *Lys.* At present indeed we have no right, and that is our complaint. *Cri.* You would have then what you have no right to. *Lys.* Not so neither: what we would have is first a right conveyed by law, and in the next place, the lands by virtue of such right. *Cri.* In order to this, it might be expedient, in the first place, to get an act passed for excommunicating from all civil rights every man that is a Christian, a scholar, and wears a black coat, as guilty of three capital offences against the public weal of this realm. *Lys.* To deal frankly, I think it would be an excellent good act. It would provide at once for several deserving men, rare artificers in wit and argument and ridicule, who have, too many of them, but small fortunes with a great arrear of merit towards their country, which they have so long enlightened and adorned gratis. *Euph.* Pray tell me, Lysicles, are not the clergy legally possessed of their lands and emoluments? *Lys.* Nobody denies it. *Euph.* Have they not been possessed of them from time immemorial? *Lys.* This too I grant. *Euph.* They claim them by law and ancient prescription. *Lys.* They do. *Euph.* Have the oldest families of the nobility a

better title? *Lys.* I believe not. It grieves me to see so many overgrown estates in the hands of ancient families, on account of no other merit, but what they brought with them into the world. *Euph.* May you not then as well take their lands too, and bestow them on the minute philosophers, as persons of more merit? *Lys.* So much the better. This enlarges our view, and opens a new scene: it is very delightful, in the contemplation of truth, to behold how one theory grows out of another. *Alc.* Old Pætus used to say, that if the clergy were deprived of their hire, we should lose the most popular argument against them. *Lys.* But so long as men live by religion, there will never be wanting teachers and writers in defence of it. *Cri.* And how can you be sure they would be wanting, though they did not live by it; since it is well known Christianity had its defenders even when men died by it? *Lys.* One thing I know, there is a rare nursery of young plants growing up, who have been carefully guarded against every air of prejudice, and sprinkled with the dew of our choicest principles; meanwhile wishes are wearisome, and to our infinite regret nothing can be done, so long as there remains any prejudice in favour of old customs and laws and national constitutions, which, at bottom, we very well know and can demonstrate to be only words and notions.

XXXII. But, I can never hope, Crito, to make you think my schemes reasonable. We reason each right upon his own principles, and shall never agree till we quit our principles, which cannot be done by reasoning. We all talk of just, and right, and wrong, and public good, and all those things. The names may be the same, but the notions and conclusions very different, perhaps diametrically opposite; and yet each may admit of clear proofs, and be inferred by the same way of reasoning. For instance, the gentlemen of the club which I frequent, define man to be a sociable animal: consequently, we exclude from this definition all those human creatures, of whom it may be said, we had rather have their room than their company. And such, though wearing the shape of man, are to be esteemed in all account of reason, not as men, but only as human creatures. Hence it plainly follows, that men of pleasure, men of humour, and men of wit, are alone properly and truly to be considered as men. Whatever therefore conduceth to the emolument of such is for the good of mankind, and consequently very just and lawful, although seeming to be attended with loss or damage to other creatures: inasmuch as no real injury can be done in life or property to those, who know not how to enjoy them. This we hold for clear and well connected reasoning. But others may view things in another light, assign different definitions, draw other inferences, and perhaps consider, what we suppose the very top and flower of the creation, only as a wart or excrescence of

human nature. From all which there must ensue a very different system of morals, politics, rights, and notions. *Cri.* If you have a mind to argue, we will argue; if you have more mind to jest, we will laugh with you. *Lys.*

——— Ridentem dicere verum
Quid vetat?

This partition of our kind into men and human creatures, puts me in mind of another notion, broached by one of our club, whom we used to call the Pythagorean.

XXXIII. He made a threefold partition of the human species, into birds, beasts, and fishes, being of opinion that the road of life lies upwards, in a perpetual ascent through the scale of being: in such sort, that the souls of insects after death make their second appearance, in the shape of perfect animals, birds, beasts, or fishes; which upon their death are preferred into human bodies, and in the next stage into beings of a higher and more perfect kind. This man we considered at first as a sort of heretic, because his scheme seemed not to consist with our fundamental tenet, the mortality of the soul: but he justified the notion to be innocent, inasmuch as it included nothing of reward or punishment, and was not proved by any argument, which supposed or implied either incorporeal spirit or providence, being only inferred, by way of analogy, from what he had observed in human affairs, the court, the church, and the army; wherein the tendency is always upwards from lower posts to higher. According to this system, the fishes are those men who swim in pleasure, such as *petits maîtres, bons vivans,* and honest fellows. The beasts are dry, drudging, covetous, rapacious folk, and all those addicted to care and business like oxen, and other dry land animals, which spend their lives in labour and fatigue. The birds are airy, notional men, enthusiasts, projectors, philosophers, and such like: in each species every individual retaining a tincture of his former state, which constitutes what is called genius. If you ask me which species of human creatures I like best, I answer, the flying fish; that is, a man of animal enjoyment with a mixture of whim. Thus you see we have our creeds and our systems, as well as graver folks; with this difference, that they are not strait-laced, but sit easy, to be slipped off or on, as humour or occasion serves. And now I can, with the greatest equanimity imaginable, hear my opinions argued against, or confuted.

XXXIV. *Alc.* It were to be wished, all men were of that mind. But you shall find a sort of men, whom I need not name, that cannot bear, with the least temper, to have their opinions examined or their faults censured. They are against reason, because reason is against them. For our parts we are all for liberty of conscience. If our tenets are absurd, we allow

them to be freely argued and inspected; and by parity of reason we might hope to be allowed the same privilege, with respect to the opinions of other men. *Cri.* O Alciphron, wares that will not bear the light are justly to be suspected. Whatever therefore moves you to make this complaint, take my word I never will: but as hitherto I have allowed your reason its full scope, so for the future I always shall. And though I cannot approve of railing or declaiming, not even in myself, whenever you have shown me the way to it: yet this I will answer for, that you shall ever be allowed to reason as closely and as strenuously as you can. But for the love of truth, be candid, and do not spend your strength and our time in points of no significancy, or foreign to the purpose, or agreed between us. We allow that tyranny and slavery are bad things: but why should we apprehend them from the clergy at this time? Rites and ceremonies we own are not points of chief moment in religion: but why should we ridicule things in their own nature, at least, innocent, and which bears the stamp of supreme authority? That men in divinity, as well as other subjects, are perplexed with useless disputes, and are like to be so as long as the world lasts, I freely acknowledge; but why must all the human weakness and mistakes of clergymen be imputed to wicked designs? Why indiscriminately abuse their character and tenets? Is this like candour, love of truth, and free-thinking? It is granted there may be found, now and then, spleen and ill-breeding in the clergy; but are not the same faults incident to English laymen, of a retired education and country life? I grant there is infinite futility in the schoolmen: but I deny that a volume of that doth so much mischief, as a page of minute philosophy. That weak or wicked men should, by favour of the world, creep into power and high stations in the church, is nothing wonderful: and that in such stations they should behave like themselves, is natural to suppose. But all the while it is evident, that not the gospel but the world, not the spirit but the flesh, not God but the devil, puts them upon their unworthy achievements. We make no difficulty to grant, that nothing is more infamous than vice and ignorance in a clergyman; nothing more base than a hypocrite, more frivolous than a pedant, more cruel than an inquisitor. But it must be also granted by you, gentlemen, that nothing is more ridiculous and absurd, than for pedantic, ignorant, and corrupt men to cast the first stone, at every shadow of their own defects and vices in other men.

XXXV. *Alc.* When I consider the detestable state of slavery and superstition, I feel my heart dilate and expand itself to grasp that inestimable blessing of liberty, absolute liberty in its utmost unlimited extent. This is the sacred and high prerogative, the very life and health of our English constitution. You must not

therefore think it strange, if with a vigilant and curious eye, we guard it against the minutest appearance of evil. You must even suffer us to cut round about, and very deep, and make use of the magnifying glass, the better to view and extirpate every the least speck, which shall discover itself in what we are careful and jealous to preserve, as the apple of our eye. *Cri.* As for unbounded liberty I leave it to savages, among whom alone I believe it is to be found: but, for the reasonable legal liberty of our constitution, I most heartily and sincerely wish it may for ever subsist and flourish among us. You and all other Englishmen cannot be too vigilant, or too earnest, to preserve this goodly frame, or to curb and disappoint the wicked ambition of whoever, layman or ecclesiastic, shall attempt to change our free and gentle government into a slavish or severe one. But what pretext can this afford for your attempts against religion, or indeed how can it be consistent with them? Is not the protestant religion a main part of our legal constitution? I remember to have heard a foreigner remark, that we of this island were very good protestants, but no Christians. But whatever minute philosophers may wish, or foreigners say, it is certain our laws speak a different language. *Alc.* This puts me in mind of the wise reasoning of a certain sage magistrate, who, being pressed by the raillery and arguments of an ingenious man, had nothing to say for his religion but that ten millions of people inhabiting the same island might, whether right or wrong, if they thought good, establish laws for the worshipping of God in their temples, and appealing to him in their courts of justice. And that in case ten thousand ingenious men should publicly deride and trample on those laws, it might be just and lawful for the said ten millions to expel the said ten thousand ingenious men out of their said island. *Euph.* And pray, what answer would you make to this remark of the sage magistrate? *Alc.* The answer is plain. By the law of nature, which is superior to all positive institutions, wit and knowledge have a right to command folly and ignorance. I say, ingenious men have by natural right a dominion over fools. *Euph.* What dominion over the laws and people of Great Britain, minute philosophers may be entitled to by nature, I shall not dispute, but leave to be considered by the public. *Alc.* This doctrine, it must be owned, was never thoroughly understood before our own times. In the last age Hobbes and his followers, though otherwise very great men, declared for the religion of the magistrate, probably because they were afraid of the magistrate: but times are changed and the magistrates may now be afraid of us. *Cri.* I allow the magistrate may well be afraid of you in one sense, I mean, afraid to trust you. This brings to my thoughts a passage on the trial of Leander for a capital offence: that gentleman having picked out and excluded from his jury, by peremptory exception, all but

some men of fashion and pleasure, humbly moved when Dorcon was going to kiss the book, that he might be required to declare upon honour, whether he believed either God or gospel. Dorcon, rather than hazard his reputation as a man of honour and free-thinker, openly avowed, that he believed in neither. Upon which the court declared him unfit to serve on a jury. By the same reason, so many were set aside, as made it necessary to put off the trial. We are very easy, replied Alciphron, about being trusted to serve on juries, if we can be admitted to serve in lucrative employments. *Cri.* But what if the government should enjoin, that every one, before he was sworn into office, should make the same declaration which Dorcon was required to make? *Alc.* God forbid! I hope there is no such design on foot. *Cri.* Whatever designs may be on foot, thus much is certain: the Christian reformed religion is a principal part and corner stone of our free constitution; and I verily think, the only thing that makes us deserving of freedom, or capable of enjoying it. Freedom is either a blessing or a curse as men use it. And to me it seems, that if our religion were once destroyed from among us, and those notions, which pass for prejudices of a Christian education, erased from the minds of Britons, the best thing that could befall us would be the loss of our freedom. Surely a people wherein there is such restless ambition, such high spirits, such animosity of faction, so great interests in contest, such unbounded license of speech and press, amidst so much wealth and luxury, nothing but those *veteres aviæ*, which you pretend to extirpate, could have hitherto kept from ruin.

XXXVI. Under the Christian religion this nation hath been greatly improved. From a sort of savages, we have grown civil, polite, and learned: we have made a decent and noble figure both at home and abroad. And, as our religion decreaseth, I am afraid we shall be found to have declined. Why then should we persist in the dangerous experiment? *Alc.* One would think, Crito, you had forgot the many calamities occasioned by churchmen and religion. *Cri.* And one would think, you had forgot what was answered this very day to that objection. But, not to repeat eternally the same things, I shall observe in the first place, that if we reflect on the past state of Christendom, and of our country in particular, with our feuds and factions subsisting while we were all of the same religion, for instance, that of the white and red roses, so violent and bloody and of such long continuance; we can have no assurance that those ill humours, which have since shown themselves under the mask of religion, would not have broke out with some other pretext, if this had been wanting. I observe in the second place, that it will not follow from any observations you can make on our history, that the evils, accidentally occasioned by religion, bear any proportion

either to the good effects it hath really produced, or the evils it hath prevented. Lastly, I observe, that the best things may by accident be the occasion of evil; which accidental effect is not, to speak properly and truly, produced by the good thing itself, but by some evil thing, which being neither part, property, nor effect of it, happens to be joined with it. But I should be ashamed to insist and enlarge on so plain a point, and shall only add that, whatever evils this nation might have formerly sustained from superstition, no man of common sense will say, the evils felt or apprehended at present are from that quarter. Priestcraft is not the reigning distemper at this day. And surely it will be owned that a wise man who takes upon him to be vigilant for the public weal, should touch proper things at proper times, and not prescribe for a surfeit when the distemper is a consumption. *Alc.* I think we have sufficiently discussed the subject of this day's conference. And now, let Lysicles take it as he will, I must in regard to my own character, as a fair impartial adversary, acknowledge there is something in what Crito hath said upon the usefulness of the Christian religion. I will even own to you that some of our sect are for allowing it a toleration. I remember, at a meeting of several ingenious men, after much debate we came successively to divers resolutions. The first was, that no religion ought to be tolerated in the state: but this on more mature thought was judged impracticable. The second was that all religions should be tolerated, but none countenanced except atheism: but it was apprehended, that this might breed contentions among the lower sort of people. We came therefore to conclude in the third place, that some religion or other should be established for the use of the vulgar. And after a long dispute what this religion should be, Lysis, a brisk young man, perceiving no signs of agreement, proposed that the present religion might be tolerated till a better was found. But allowing it to be expedient, I can never think it true, so long as there lie unanswerable objections against it, which, if you please, I shall take the liberty to propose at our next meeting. To which we all agreed.

THE SIXTH DIALOGUE.

I. Points agreed. II. Sundry pretences to revelation. III. Uncertainty of tradition. IV. Object and ground of faith. V. Some books disputed, others evidently spurious. VI. Style and composition of holy scripture. VII. Difficulties occurring therein. VIII. Obscurity not always a defect. IX. Inspiration neither impossible nor absurd. X. Objections from the form and matter of divine revelation, considered. XI. Infidelity an effect of narrowness and prejudice. XII. Articles of Christian faith not unreasonable. XIII. Guilt the natural parent of fear. XIV. Things unknown reduced to the standard of what men know. XV. Prejudices against the incarnation of the Son of God. XVI. Ignorance of the divine economy, a source of difficulties. XVII. Wisdom of God, foolishness to man. XVIII. Reason, no blind guide. XIX. Usefulness of divine revelation. XX. Prophecies, whence obscure. XXI. Eastern accounts of time older than the Mosaic. XXII. The humour of Egyptians, Assyrians, Chaldeans, and other nations extending their antiquity beyond truth, accounted for. XXIII. Reasons confirming the Mosaic account. XXIV. Profane historians inconsistent. XXV. Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian. XXVI. The testimony of Josephus considered. XXVII. Attestation of Jews and Gentiles to Christianity. XXVIII. Forgeries and heresies. XXIX. Judgment and attention of minute philosophers. XXX. Faith and miracles. XXXI. Probable arguments, a sufficient ground of faith. XXXII. The Christian religion able to stand the test of rational inquiry.

I. THE following day being Sunday, our philosophers lay long in bed, while the rest of us went to church in the neighbouring town, where we dined at Euphranor's, and after evening service returned to the two philosophers, whom we found in the library. They told us, that if there was a God, he was present every where as well as at church; and that if we had been serving him one way, they did not neglect to do as much another; inasmuch as a free exercise of reason must be allowed the most acceptable service and worship, that a rational creature can offer to its Creator. However, said Alciphron, if you, gentlemen, can but solve the difficulties which I shall propose to-morrow morning, I promise to go to church next Sunday. After some general conversation of this kind, we sat down to a light supper, and the next morning assembled at the same place as the day before, where, being all seated, I observed, that the foregoing week our conferences had been carried on for a longer time, and with less interruption than I had ever known, or well could be, in town, where men's hours are so broken by visits, business, and amusements, that whoever is content to form his notions from conversation only, must needs have them very shattered and imperfect. And what have we got, replied Alciphron, by all these continued conferences? For my part, I think myself just where I was, with respect to the main point that divides us, the truth of the Christian religion. I answered, that so many points had been examined, discussed, and agreed, between him and his adversaries, that I hoped to see them come to an entire agreement in the end. For, in the first place, said I, the principles and

opinions of those who are called free-thinkers, or minute philosophers, have been pretty clearly explained. It hath been also agreed, that vice is not of that benefit to the nation which some men imagine: that virtue is highly useful to mankind: but that the beauty of virtue is not alone sufficient to engage them in the practice of it: that therefore the belief of a God and providence ought to be encouraged in the state, and tolerated in good company, as a useful notion. Further, it hath been proved that there is a God; that it is reasonable to worship him; and that the worship, faith, and principles, prescribed by the Christian religion, have a useful tendency. Admit, replied Alciphron, addressing himself to Crito, all that Dion saith to be true: yet this doth not hinder my being just where I was with respect to the main point. Since there is nothing in all this that proves the truth of the Christian religion; though each of those particulars enumerated may, perhaps, prejudice in its favour. I am therefore to suspect myself, at present, for a prejudiced person; prejudiced, I say, in favour of Christianity. This, as I am a lover of truth, puts me upon my guard against deception. I must therefore look sharp, and well consider every step I take.

II. *Cri.* You may remember, Alciphron, you proposed for the subject of our present conference, the consideration of certain difficulties and objections which you had to offer against the Christian religion. We are now ready to hear and consider whatever you shall think fit to produce of that kind. Atheism, and a wrong notion of Christianity, as of something hurtful to mankind, are great prejudices; the removal of which may dispose a man to argue with candour and submit to reasonable proof: but the removing prejudices against an opinion, is not to be reckoned prejudicing in its favour. It may be hoped, therefore, that you will be able to do justice to your cause, without being fond of it. *Alc.* O Crito! that man may thank his stars to whom nature hath given a sublime soul, who can raise himself above popular opinions, and, looking down on the herd of mankind, behold them scattered over the surface of the whole earth, divided and subdivided into numberless nations and tribes, differing in notions and tenets, as in language, manners, and dress. The man who takes a general view of the world and its inhabitants, from this lofty stand, above the reach of prejudice, seems to breathe a purer air, and to see by a clearer light: but how to impart this clear and extensive view to those who are wandering beneath, in the narrow, dark paths of error! this indeed is a hard task; but hard as it is I shall try, if by any means,

Clara tuæ possim præpandere lumina menti.—LUCRET.

Know then, that all the various casts or sects of the sons of men have each their faith, and their religious system, germinating

and sprouting forth from that common grain of enthusiasm, which is an original ingredient in the composition of human nature; they shall each tell of intercourse with the invisible world, revelations from heaven, divine oracles, and the like. All which pretensions, when I regard with an impartial eye, it is impossible I should assent to all; and I find within myself something that withholds me from assenting to any of them. For although I may be willing to follow, so far as common sense and the light of nature lead; yet the same reason that bids me yield to rational proof, forbids me to admit opinions without proof. This holds in general against all revelations whatsoever. And be this my first objection against the Christian in particular. *Cri.* As this objection supposes there is no proof or reason for believing the Christian, if good reason can be assigned for such belief, it comes to nothing. Now I presume you will grant, the authority of the reporter is a true and proper reason for believing reports; and the better this authority, the juster claim it hath to our assent: but the authority of God is on all accounts the best: whatever therefore comes from God, it is most reasonable to believe.

III. *Alc.* This I grant; but then it must be proved to come from God. *Cri.* And are not miracles, and the accomplishments of prophecies, joined with the excellency of its doctrine, a sufficient proof that the Christian religion came from God? *Alc.* Miracles, indeed, would prove something: but what proof have we of these miracles? *Cri.* Proof of the same kind that we have or can have of any facts done a great way off, and a long time ago. We have authentic accounts transmitted down to us from eye-witnesses, whom we cannot conceive tempted to impose upon us by any human motive whatsoever; inasmuch as they acted therein contrary to their interests, their prejudices, and the very principles in which they had been nursed and educated. These accounts were confirmed by the unparalleled subversion of the city of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of the Jewish nation, which is a standing testimony to the truth of the gospel, particularly of the predictions of our blessed Saviour. These accounts, within less than a century, were spread throughout the world, and believed by great numbers of people. These same accounts were committed to writing, translated into several languages, and handed down with the same respect and consent of Christians in the most distant churches. Do you not see, said Alciphron, staring full at Crito, that all this hangs by tradition? And tradition, take my word for it, gives but a weak hold: it is a chain, whereof the first links may be stronger than steel, and yet the last weak as wax, and brittle as glass. Imagine a picture copied successively by a hundred painters, one from another; how like must the last copy be to the original! How lively and

distinct will an image be, after a hundred reflections between two parallel mirrors! Thus like, and thus lively do I think a faint, vanishing tradition, at the end of sixteen or seventeen hundred years. Some men have a false heart, others a wrong head; and where both are true, the memory may be treacherous. Hence there is still something added, something omitted, and something varied from the truth: and the sum of many such additions, deductions, and alterations, accumulated for several ages, do, at the foot of the account, make quite another thing. *Cri.* Ancient facts we may know by tradition, oral or written: and this latter we may divide into two kinds, private and public, as writings are kept in the hands of particular men, or recorded in public archives. Now all these three sorts of tradition, for aught I can see, concur to attest the genuine antiquity of the gospels. And they are strengthened by collateral evidence from rites instituted, festivals observed, and monuments erected by ancient Christians, such as churches, baptisteries, and sepulchres. Now allowing your objection holds against oral tradition, singly taken, yet I can think it no such difficult thing to transcribe faithfully. And things once committed to writing, are secure from slips of memory, and may with common care be preserved entire so long as the manuscript lasts: and this, experience shows, may be above a thousand years. The Alexandrine manuscript is allowed to be above twelve hundred years old; and it is highly probable there were then extant copies four hundred years old. A tradition therefore of above sixteen hundred years old, need have only two or three links in its chain. And these links, notwithstanding that great length of time, may be very sound and entire. Since no reasonable man will deny, that an ancient manuscript may be of much the same credit now, as when it was first written. We have it on good authority, and it seems probable, that the primitive Christians were careful to transcribe copies of the gospels and epistles for their private use, and that other copies were preserved as public records, in the several churches throughout the world, and that portions thereof were constantly read in their assemblies. Can more be said to prove the writings of classic authors, or ancient records of any kind authentic? Alciphron, addressing his discourse to Euphranor, said, It is one thing to silence an adversary, and another to convince him. What do you think, Euphranor? *Euph.* Doubtless it is. *Alc.* But what I want is to be convinced. *Euph.* That point is not so clear. *Alc.* But if a man had ever so much mind, he cannot be convinced by probable arguments against demonstration. *Euph.* I grant he cannot.

IV. *Alc.* Now it is as evident as demonstration can make it, that no divine faith can possibly be built upon tradition. Suppose an honest, credulous countryman catechised and lectured

every Sunday by his parish priest: it is plain he believes in the parson, and not in God. He knows nothing of revelations, and doctrines, and miracles, but what the priest tells him. This he believes, and his faith is purely human. If you say he has the liturgy and the bible for the foundation of his faith, the difficulty still recurs. For as to the liturgy, he pins his faith upon the civil magistrate, as well as the ecclesiastic: neither of which can pretend divine inspiration. Then for the bible, he takes both that and his prayer-book on trust from the printer, who, he believes, made true editions from true copies. You see then faith, but what faith? faith in the priest, in the magistrate, in the printer, editor, transcriber, none of which can with any pretence be called divine. I had the hint from Cratylus; it is a shaft out of his quiver, and believe me, a keen one. *Euph.* Let me take and make trial of this same shaft in my hands. Suppose then your countryman hears a magistrate declare the law from the bench, or suppose he reads it in a statute book. What think you, is the printer or the justice the true and proper object of his faith and submission? Or do you acknowledge a higher authority whereon to found those loyal acts, and in which they do really terminate? Again, suppose you read a passage in Tacitus that you believe true; would you say you assented to it on the authority of the printer or transcriber rather than the historian? *Alc.* Perhaps I would, and perhaps I would not. I do not think myself obliged to answer these points. What is this but transferring the question from one subject to another? That which we considered was neither law nor profane history, but religious tradition, and divine faith. I see plainly what you aim at, but shall never take for an answer to one difficulty, the starting of another. *Cri.* O Alciphron, there is no taking hold of you, who expect that others should (as you were pleased to express it) hold fair and stand firm, while you plucked out their prejudices: how shall he argue with you but from your concessions, and how can he know what you grant except you will be pleased to tell him? *Euph.* But to save you the trouble, for once I will suppose an answer. My question admits but of two answers; take your choice. From the one it will follow, that by a parity of reason we can easily conceive, how a man may have divine faith, though he never felt inspiration or saw a miracle: inasmuch as it is equally possible for the mind, through whatever conduit, oral or scriptural, divine revelation be derived, to carry its thought and submission up to the source, and terminate its faith, not in human, but in divine authority: not in the instrument or vessel of conveyance, but in the great origin itself, as its proper and true object. From the other answer it will follow, that you introduce a general scepticism into human knowledge, and break down the hinges on which civil government and all the affairs of the world

turn and depend: in a word, that you would destroy human faith to get rid of divine. And how this agrees with your professing that you want to be convinced I leave you to consider.

V. *Alc.* I should in earnest be glad to be convinced one way or other, and come to some conclusion. But I have so many objections in store, you are not to count much upon getting over one. Depend on it you shall find me behave like a gentleman and lover of truth. I will propose my objections briefly and plainly, and accept of reasonable answers as fast as you can give them. Come Euphranor, make the most of your tradition; you can never make that a constant and universal one, which is acknowledged to have been unknown, or at best disputed in the church for several ages: and this is the case of the canon of the New Testament. For though we have now a canon, as they call it, settled; yet every one must see and own that tradition cannot grow stronger by age; and that what was uncertain in the primitive times cannot be undoubted in the subsequent. What say you to this, Euphranor? *Euph.* I should be glad to conceive your meaning clearly before I return an answer. It seems to me this objection of yours supposeth, that where a tradition hath been constant and undisputed, such tradition may be admitted as a proof, but that where the tradition is defective, the proof must be so too. Is this your meaning? *Alc.* It is. *Euph.* Consequently the gospels and epistles of St. Paul, which were universally received in the beginning, and never since doubted of by the church, must, notwithstanding this objection, be in reason admitted for genuine. And if these books contain, as they really do, all those points that come into controversy between you and me; what need I dispute with you about the authority of some other books of the New Testament, which came later to be generally known and received in the church? If a man assents to the undisputed books he is no longer an infidel; though he should not hold the revelations, or the epistles of St. James or Jude, or the latter of St. Peter, or the two last of St. John to be canonical. The additional authority of these portions of holy scripture may have its weight in particular controversies between Christians, but can add nothing to arguments against an infidel as such. Wherefore though I believe good reasons may be assigned for receiving these books, yet these reasons seem now beside our purpose. When you are a Christian it will be then time enough to argue this point. And you will be the nearer being so, if the way be shortened by omitting it for the present. *Alc.* Not so near neither as you perhaps imagine: for, notwithstanding all the fair and plausible things you may say about tradition, when I consider the spirit of forgery which reigned in the primitive times, and reflect on the several gospels, acts, and epistles attributed to the apostles, which yet are

acknowledged to be spurious, I confess, I cannot help suspecting the whole. *Euph.* Tell me, Alciphron, do you suspect all Plato's writings for spurious, because the dialogue upon death, for instance, is allowed to be so? Or will you admit none of Tully's writings to be genuine, because Sigonius imposed a book of his own writing for Tully's treatise *De Consolatione*, and the imposture passed for some time on the world? *Alc.* Suppose I admit for the works of Tully and Plato those that commonly pass for such. What then? *Euph.* Why then I would fain know, whether it be equal and impartial in a free-thinker, to measure the credibility of profane and sacred books by a different rule. Let us know upon what foot we Christians are to argue with minute philosophers; whether we may be allowed the benefit of common maxims in logic and criticism? If we may, be pleased to assign a reason why supposititious writings, which in the style, and manner, and matter bear visible marks of imposture, and have accordingly been rejected by the church, can be made an argument against those which have been universally received, and handed down by a unanimous, constant tradition. There have been in all ages and in all great societies of men, many capricious, vain, or wicked impostors, who for different ends have abused the world by spurious writings, and created work for critics both in profane and sacred learning. And it would seem as silly to reject the true writings of profane authors for the sake of the spurious, as it would seem unreasonable to suppose, that among the heretics and several sects of Christians, there should be none capable of the like imposture.

VI. *Alc.* But, be the tradition ever so well attested, and the books ever so genuine, yet I cannot suppose them wrote by persons divinely inspired, so long as I see in them certain characters inconsistent with such a supposition. Surely the purest language, the most perfect style, the exactest method, and in a word all the excellencies of good writing, might be expected in a piece composed or dictated by the spirit of God: but books, wherein we find the reverse of all this, it were impious not to reject, but to attribute to the Divinity. *Euph.* Say, Alciphron, are the lakes, the rivers, or the ocean bounded by straight lines? Are the hills and mountains exact cones or pyramids? or the stars cast into regular figures? *Alc.* They are not. *Euph.* But in the works of insects, we may observe figures as exact as if they were drawn by the rule and compass. *Alc.* We may. *Euph.* Should it not seem therefore that a regular exactness, or scrupulous attention to what men call the rules of art, is not observed in the great productions of the author of nature? *Alc.* It should. *Euph.* And when a great prince declareth his will in laws and edicts to his subjects, is he careful about a pure style or elegant composition? Does he not leave his secretaries and clerks to

express his sense in their own words? Is not the phrase on such occasions thought proper if it conveys as much as was intended? And would not the divine strain of certain modern critics be judged affected and improper for such uses? *Alc.* It must be owned, laws, and edicts, and grants, for solecism and tautology, are very offensive to the harmonious ears of a fine writer. *Euph.* Why then should we expect in the oracles of God an exactness that would be misbecoming and beneath the dignity of an earthly monarch, and which bears no proportion or resemblance to the magnificent works of the creation? *Alc.* But granting that a nice regard to particles and critical rules is a thing too little and mean to be expected in divine revelations; and that there is more force and spirit and true greatness in a negligent, unequal style, than in the well-turned periods of a polite writer; yet what is all this to the bald and flat compositions of those you call the divine penmen? I can never be persuaded the supreme Being would pick out the poorest and meanest of scribblers for his secretaries. *Euph.* O Alciphron, if I durst follow my own judgment, I should be apt to think there are noble beauties in the style of the holy scripture: in the narrative parts a strain so simple and unaffected; in the devotional and prophetic, so animated and sublime: and in the doctrinal parts such an air of dignity and authority as seems to speak their original divine. But I shall not enter into a dispute about taste; much less set up my judgment on so nice a point against that of the wits, and men of genius, with which your sect abounds. And I have no temptation to it, inasmuch as it seems to me the oracles of God are not the less so for being delivered in a plain dress, rather than in the enticing words of man's wisdom. *Alc.* This may perhaps be an apology for some simplicity and negligence in writing.

VII. But what apology can be made for nonsense, crude nonsense? of which I could easily assign many instances, having once in my life read the scripture through with that very view. Look here, said he, opening a bible in the forty-ninth psalm, the author begins very magnificently, calling upon all the inhabitants of the earth to give ear, and assuring them his mouth shall speak of wisdom, and the meditation of his heart shall be of understanding.

Quid dignum tanto feret hic promissor hiatu?

He hath no sooner done with his preface, but he puts this senseless question: "Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil; when the wickedness of my heels shall compass me about?" The iniquity of my heels! What nonsense after such a solemn introduction! *Euph.* For my own part, I have naturally weak

eyes, and know there are many things that I cannot see, which are nevertheless distinctly seen by others. I do not therefore conclude a thing to be absolutely invisible; because it is so to me: and since it is possible it may be with my understanding as it is with my eyes, I dare not pronounce a thing to be nonsense because I do not understand it. Of this passage many interpretations are given. The word rendered "heels" may signify fraud or supplantation: by some it is translated "past wickedness," the heel being the hinder part of the foot; by others "iniquity in the end of my days," the heel being one extremity of the body; by some, "the iniquity of my enemies that may supplant me;" by others, "my own faults or iniquities which I have passed over as light matters, and trampled under my feet." Some render it "the iniquity of my ways;" others, "my transgressions which are like slips and slidings of the heel:" and after all, might not this expression, so harsh and odd to English ears, have been very natural and obvious in the Hebrew tongue, which, as every other language, had its idioms? the force and propriety whereof may as easily be conceived lost in a long tract of time as the signification of some Hebrew words, which are not now intelligible, though nobody doubts but they had once a meaning as well as the other words of that language. Granting therefore that certain passages in the holy scriptures may not be understood, it will not thence follow that its penmen wrote nonsense? for I conceive nonsense to be one thing, and unintelligible another. *Cri.* An English gentleman of my acquaintance one day entertaining some foreigners at his house, sent his servant to know the occasion of a sudden tumult in the yard, who brought him word the horses were fallen together by the ears: his guests inquiring what the matter was, he translates it literally: *les chevaux sont tombés ensemble par les oreilles;* which made them stare; what expressed a very plain sense in the original English, being incomprehensible when rendered word for word into French: and I remember to have heard a man excuse the bulls of his countrymen, by supposing them so many literal translations. *Euph.* But not to grow tedious, I refer to the critics and commentators where you will find the use of this remark, which, clearing up several obscure passages you took for nonsense, may possibly incline you to suspect your own judgment of the rest. In this very psalm you have pitched on, the good sense and moral contained in what follows, should, methinks, make a candid reader judge favourably of the original sense of the author, in that part which he could not understand. Say, Alciphron, in reading the classics, do you forthwith conclude every passage to be nonsense, that you cannot make sense of? *Alc.* By no means; difficulties must be supposed to rise from different idioms, old customs, hints, and allusions, clear in one time or place, and obscure in another.

Euph. And why will you not judge of scripture by the same rule. Those sources of obscurity you mention are all common both to sacred and profane writings: and there is no doubt but an exacter knowledge in language and circumstances would in both cause difficulties to vanish like shades before the light of the sun. Jeremiah, to describe a furious invader, saith, "Behold, he shall come up as a lion from the swelling of Jordan against the habitation of the strong." One would be apt to think this passage odd and improper, and that it had been more reasonable to have said "a lion from the mountain or the desert." But travellers, as an ingenious man observes, who have seen the river Jordan bounded by low lands, with many reeds or thickets affording shelter to wild beasts (which being suddenly dislodged by a rapid overflowing of the river, rush into the upland country), perceive the force and propriety of the comparison; and that the difficulty proceeds, not from nonsense in the writer, but from ignorance in the reader. It is needless to amass together instances which may be found in every commentator: I only beg leave to observe that sometimes men, looking higher or deeper than they need for a profound or remote sense, overlook the natural, obvious sense, lying, if I may so say, at their feet, and so make difficulties, instead of finding them. This seems to be the case of that celebrated passage which hath created so much work in St. Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians. "What shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?" I remember to have heard this text explained by Laches, the vicar of our parish, to my neighbour Lycon, who was much perplexed about its meaning. If it had been translated, as it might very justly, "baptized for the sake of the dead," I do not see, said Laches, why people should be puzzled about the sense of this passage; for tell me, I beseech you, for whose sake do you think those Christians were baptized? For whose sake, answered Lycon, but their own? How do you mean, for their own sake in this life or the next? Doubtless in the next, for it was plain they could get nothing by it in this. They were then, replied Laches, baptized, not for the sake of themselves while living, but for the sake of themselves when dead; not for the living, but the dead. I grant it. Baptism, therefore, must have been to them a fruitless thing, if the dead rise not at all. It must. Whence Laches inferred, that St. Paul's argument was clear and pertinent for the resurrection: and Lycon allowed it to be *argumentum ad hominem* to those who had sought baptism. There is, then, concluded Laches, no necessity for supposing, that living men were in those days baptized instead of those who died without baptism, or of running into any other odd suppositions, or strained and far-fetched interpretations, to make sense of this passage. *Alc.*

Here and there a difficult passage may be cleared: but there are many which no art or wit of man can account for. What say you to those discoveries made by some of our learned writers, of false citations from the Old Testament found in the gospel? *Euph.* That some few passages are cited by the writers of the New Testament, out of the Old, and by the fathers out of the New, which are not in so many words to be found in them, is no new discovery of minute philosophers, but known and observed long before by Christian writers; who have made no scruple to grant, that some things might have been inserted by careless or mistaken transcribers into the text, from the margin, others left out, and others altered; whence so many various readings. But these are things of small moment, and that all other ancient authors have been subject to; and upon which no point of doctrine depends, which may not be proved without them. Nay, further, if it be any advantage to your cause, it hath been observed that the eighteenth psalm, as recited in the twenty-second chapter of the second book of Samuel, varies in above forty places, if you regard every little verbal or literal difference: and that a critic may now and then discover small variations, is what nobody can deny. But to make the most of these concessions, what can you infer from them more than that the design of the holy scripture was not to make us exactly knowing in circumstantials? and that the Spirit did not dictate every particle and syllable, or preserve them from every minute alteration by miracle? which to believe, would look like rabbinical superstition. *Alc.* But what marks of divinity can possibly be in writings which do not reach the exactness even of human art? *Euph.* I never thought nor expected that the holy scripture should show itself divine, by a circumstantial accuracy of narration, by exactness of method, by strictly observing the rules of rhetoric, grammar, and criticism, in harmonious periods, in elegant and choice expressions, or in technical definitions and partitions. These things would look too like a human composition. Methinks there is in that simple, unaffected, artless, unequal, bold, figurative style of the holy scripture, a character singularly great and majestic, and that looks more like divine inspiration than any other composition that I know. But, as I said before, I shall not dispute a point of criticism with the gentlemen of your sect, who, it seems, are the modern standard for wit and taste. *Alc.* Well, I shall not insist on small slips, or the inaccuracy of citing or transcribing: and I freely own that repetitions, want of method, or want of exactness in circumstances, are not the things that chiefly stick with me; no more than the plain, patriarchal manners, or the peculiar usages and customs of the Jews and first Christians, so different from ours; and that to reject the scripture on such accounts would be to act like those French wits, who

censure Homer because they do not find in him the style, notions, and manners of their own age and country. Was there nothing else to divide us, I should make no great difficulty of owning, that a popular, uncorrect style might answer the general ends of revelation, as well, perhaps, as a more critical and exact one: but the obscurity still sticks with me. Methinks if the supreme Being had spoke to man, he would have spoke clearly to him, and that the word of God should not need a comment.

VIII. *Euph.* You seem, Alciphron, to think obscurity a defect; but if it should prove to be no defect, there would then be no force in this objection. *Alc.* I grant there would not. *Euph.* Pray tell me, are not speech and style instrumental to convey thoughts and notions, to beget knowledge, opinion, and assent? *Alc.* This is true. *Euph.* And is not the perfection of an instrument to be measured by the use to which it is subservient? *Alc.* It is. *Euph.* What therefore is a defect in one instrument, may be none in another. For instance, edged tools are in general designed to cut; but the uses of an axe and a razor being different, it is no defect in an axe, that it hath not the keen edge of a razor; nor in a razor, that it hath not the weight or strength of an axe. *Alc.* I acknowledge this to be true. *Euph.* And may we not say in general, that every instrument is perfect, which answers the purpose or intention of him who useth it? *Alc.* We may. *Euph.* Hence it seems to follow, that no man's speech is defective in point of clearness, though it should not be intelligible to all men, if it be sufficiently so to those who, he intended, should understand it; or though it should not in all parts be equally clear, or convey a perfect knowledge, where he intended only an imperfect hint. *Alc.* It seems so. *Euph.* Ought we not therefore to know the intention of the speaker, to be able to know whether his style be obscure through defect or design? *Alc.* We ought. *Euph.* But is it possible for man to know all the ends and purposes of God's revelations? *Alc.* It is not. *Euph.* How then can you tell, but the obscurity of some parts of scripture may well consist with the purpose which you know not, and consequently be no argument against its coming from God? The books of holy scripture were written in ancient languages, at distant times, on sundry occasions, and very different subjects: is it not therefore reasonable to imagine, that some parts or passages might have been clearly enough understood by those, for whose proper use they were principally designed, and yet seem obscure to us, who speak another language, and live in other times? Is it at all absurd or unsuitable to the notion we have of God or man, to suppose that God may reveal, and yet reveal with a reserve, upon certain remote and sublime subjects, content to give us hints and glimpses, rather than views? May we not also suppose from the reason of things, and the analogy

of nature, that some points, which might otherwise have been more clearly explained, were left obscure merely to encourage our diligence and modesty? Two virtues, which, if it might not seem disrespectful to such great men, I would recommend to the minute philosophers. Lysicles replied, This indeed is excellent: you expect that men of sense and spirit should in great humility put out their eyes, and blindly swallow all the absurdities and nonsense that shall be offered to them for divine revelation. *Euph.* On the contrary, I would have them open their eyes, look sharply, and try the spirit, whether it is of God; and not supinely and ignorantly condemn in the gross, all religions together, piety with superstition, truth for the sake of error, matters of fact for the sake of fictions: a conduct, which at first sight would seem absurd in history, physic, or any other branch of human inquiry: but to compare the Christian system, or holy scriptures, with other pretences to divine revelation, to consider impartially the doctrines, precepts, and events therein contained; weigh them in the balance with any other religious, natural, moral, or historical accounts; and diligently to examine all those proofs, internal and external, that for so many ages have been able to influence and persuade so many wise, learned, and inquisitive men: perhaps they might find in it certain peculiar characters, which sufficiently distinguish it from all other religions and pretended revelations, whereon to ground a reasonable faith. In which case I leave them to consider, whether it would be right to reject with peremptory scorn a revelation so distinguished and attested, upon account of obscurity in some parts of it? and whether it would seem beneath men of their sense and spirit to acknowledge, that, for aught they know, a light inadequate to things, may yet be adequate to the purpose of Providence? and whether it might be unbecoming their sagacity and critical skill to own, that literal translations from books in an ancient oriental tongue, wherein there are so many peculiarities, as to the manner of writing, the figures of speech, and structure of the phrase, so remote from all our modern idioms, and in which we have no other coeval writings extant, might well be obscure in many places, especially such as treat of subjects sublime and difficult in their own nature, or allude to things, customs, or events, very distant from our knowledge? And lastly, whether it might not become their character, as impartial and unprejudiced men, to consider the bible in the same light they would profane authors? They are apt to make great allowance for transpositions, omissions, and literal errors of transcribers in other ancient books, and very great for the difference of style and manner, especially in eastern writings, such as the remains of Zoroaster and Confucius, and why not in the prophets? In reading Horace or Persius, to make out the sense, they will be at

the pains to discover a hidden drama, and why not in Solomon or St. Paul? I hear there are certain ingenious men who despise king David's poetry, and yet propose to admire Homer and Pindar. If there be no prejudice or affectation in this, let them but make a literal version from those authors into English prose, and they will then be better able to judge of the psalms. *Alc.* You may discourse and expatiate: but notwithstanding all you have said or shall say, it is a clear point that a revelation which doth not reveal, can be no better than a contradiction in terms. *Euph.* Tell me, Alciphron, do you not acknowledge the light of the sun to be the most glorious production of Providence in this natural world? *Alc.* Suppose I do. *Euph.* This light, nevertheless, which you cannot deny to be of God's making, shines only on the surface of things, shines not at all in the night, shines imperfectly in the twilight, is often interrupted, refracted, and obscured, represents distant things and small things dubiously, imperfectly, or not at all. Is this true or no? *Alc.* It is. *Euph.* Should it not follow therefore, that to expect in this world a light from God without any mixture of shade or mystery, would be departing from the rule and analogy of the creation? and that consequently it is no argument the light of revelation is not divine, because it may not be so clear and full as you expect. *Alc.* As I profess myself candid and indifferent throughout this debate, I must needs own you say some plausible things, as a man of argument will never fail to do in vindication of his prejudices.

IX. But, to deal plainly, I must tell you once for all, that you may question and answer, illustrate and enlarge for ever, without being able to convince me that the Christian is of divine revelation. I have said several things, and have many more to say, which, believe me, have weight not only with myself, but with many great men my very good friends, and will have weight whatever Euphranor can say to the contrary. *Euph.* O Alciphron, I envy you the happiness of such acquaintance. But, as my lot fallen in this remote corner deprives me of that advantage, I am obliged to make the most of this opportunity, which you and Lysicles have put into my hands. I consider you as two able chirurgeons, and you were pleased to consider me as a patient, whose cure you have generously undertaken. Now a patient must have full liberty to explain his case, and tell all his symptoms, the concealing or palliating of which might prevent a perfect cure. You will be pleased therefore to understand me, not as objecting to, or arguing against, either your skill or medicines, but only as setting forth my own case and the effects they have upon me. Say, Alciphron, did you not give me to understand that you would extirpate my prejudices? *Alc.* It is true: a good physician eradicates every fibre of the disease. Come, you

shall have a patient hearing. *Euph.* Pray, was it not the opinion of Plato, that God inspired particular men, as organs or trumpets, to proclaim and sound forth his oracles to the world?* And was not the same opinion also embraced by others the greatest writers of antiquity? *Cri.* Socrates seems to have thought that all true poets spoke by inspiration; and Tully, that there was no extraordinary genius without it. This hath made some of our affected free-thinkers attempt to pass themselves upon the world for enthusiasts. *Alc.* What would you infer from all this? *Euph.* I would infer that inspiration should seem nothing impossible or absurd, but rather agreeable to the light of reason and the notions of mankind. And this, I suppose, you will acknowledge, having made it an objection against a particular revelation, that there are so many pretences to it throughout the world. *Alc.* O Euphranor, he who looks into the bottom of things, and resolves them into their first principles, is not easily amused with words. The word *inspiration* sounds indeed big, but let us, if you please, take an original view of the thing signified by it. To *inspire* is a word borrowed from the Latin, and strictly taken means no more than to breathe or blow in; nothing therefore can be inspired but what can be blown or breathed, and nothing can be so but wind or vapour, which indeed may fill or puff up men with fanatical and hypochondriacal ravings. This sort of inspiration I very readily admit. *Euph.* What you say is subtle, and I know not what effect it might have upon me, if your profound discourse did not hinder its own operation. *Alc.* How so? *Euph.* Tell me, Alciphron, do you discourse or do you not? To me it seems that you discourse admirably. *Alc.* Be that as it will, it is certain I discourse. *Euph.* But when I endeavour to look into the bottom of things, behold! a scruple riseth in my mind how this can be; for to *discourse* is a word of Latin derivation, which originally signifies to *run about*; and a man cannot run about, but he must change place and move his legs; so long therefore as you sit on this bench, you cannot be said to discourse. Solve me this difficulty, and then perhaps I may be able to solve yours. *Alc.* You are to know, that *discourse* is a word borrowed from sensible things to express an invisible action of the mind, reasoning or inferring one thing from another; and in this translated sense, we may be said to discourse, though we sit still. *Euph.* And may we not as well conceive, that the term *inspiration* might be borrowed from sensible things to denote an action of God, in an extraordinary manner, influencing, exciting, and enlightening the mind of a prophet or an apostle? who, in this secondary, figurative, and translated sense, may truly be said to be inspired, though there should be nothing in the case of that wind or vapour implied in the original sense of the word. It seems to me, that we may, by looking into our own minds, plainly

* Plato in Ione.

perceive certain instincts, impulses, and tendencies, which at proper periods and occasions spring up unaccountably in the soul of man. We observe very visible signs of the same in all other animals. And these things being ordinary and natural, what hinders, but we may conceive it possible for the human mind, upon an extraordinary account, to be moved in an extraordinary manner, and its faculties stirred up and actuated by supernatural power? That there are, and have been, and are likely to be wild visions and hypochondriacal ravings, nobody can deny; but to infer from thence that there are no true inspirations, would be too like concluding, that some men are not in their senses, because other men are fools. And though I am no prophet, and consequently cannot pretend to a clear notion of this matter; yet I shall not therefore take upon me to deny, but a true prophet, or inspired person, might have had as certain means of discerning between divine inspiration and hypochondriacal fancy, as you can between sleeping and waking, till you have proved the contrary. You may meet in the book of Jeremiah with this passage: "The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream: and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully: what is the chaff to the wheat, saith the Lord? Is not my word like as a fire, saith the Lord, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?"* You see here a distinction made between wheat and chaff, true and spurious, with the mighty force and power of the former. But I beg pardon for quoting scripture to you; I make my appeal to the general sense of mankind, and the opinion of the wisest heathens, which seems sufficient to conclude divine inspiration possible, if not probable, at least till you prove the contrary.

X. *Alc.* The possibility of inspirations and revelations I do not think it necessary to deny. Make the best you can of this concession. *Euph.* Now what is allowed possible we may suppose in fact. *Alc.* We may. *Euph.* Let us then suppose, that God had been pleased to make a revelation to men; and that he inspired some as a means to instruct others. Having supposed this, can you deny that their inspired discourses and revelations might have been committed to writing, or that being written, after a long tract of time they might become in several places obscure; that some of them might even originally have been less clear than others, or that they might suffer some alteration by frequent transcribing, as other writings are known to have done? Is it not even very probable that all these things would happen? *Alc.* I grant it. *Euph.* And granting this, with what pretence can you reject the holy scriptures as not being divine, upon the account of such signs or marks, as you acknowledge would probably attend a divine revelation transmitted down to us through so many ages? *Alc.* But allowing all that in reason you can

* Jer. xxiii. 28, 29.

desire, and granting that this may account for some obscurity, may reconcile some small differences, or satisfy us how some difficulties might arise by inserting, omitting, or changing here and there a letter, a word, or perhaps a sentence: yet these are but small matters, in respect of the much more considerable and weighty objections I could produce, against the confessed doctrines, or subject matter of those writings. Let us see what is contained in these sacred books, and then judge whether it is probable or possible, such revelations should ever have been made by God? Now I defy the wit of man to contrive any thing more extravagant, than the accounts we there find of apparitions, devils, miracles, God manifest in the flesh, regeneration, grace, self-denial, resurrection of the dead, and such like *ægri somnia:* things so odd, unaccountable, and remote from the apprehension of mankind, you may as soon wash a blackamore white, as clear them of absurdity. No critical skill can justify them, no tradition recommend them, I will not say for divine revelations, but even for the inventions of men of sense. *Euph.* I had always a great opinion of your sagacity, but now, Alciphron, I consider you as something more than man; else how should it be possible for you to know what, or how far, it may be proper for God to reveal? Methinks it may consist with all due deference to the greatest of human understandings, to suppose them ignorant of many things, which are not suited to their faculties, or lie out of their reach. Even the counsels of princes lie often beyond the ken of their subjects, who can only know so much as is revealed by those at the helm; and are often unqualified to judge of the usefulness and tendency even of that, till, in due time, the scheme unfolds, and is accounted for by succeeding events. That many points contained in holy scripture are remote from the common apprehensions of mankind, cannot be denied. But I do not see that it follows from thence they are not of divine revelation. On the contrary, should it not seem reasonable to suppose, that a revelation from God should contain something different in kind, or more excellent in degree, than what lay open to the common sense of men, or could even be discovered by the most sagacious philosopher? Accounts of separate spirits, good or bad, prophecies, miracles, and such things, are undoubtedly strange; but I would fain see how you can prove them impossible or absurd. *Alc.* Some things there are so evidently absurd, that it would be almost as silly to disprove them as to believe them; and I take these to be of that class.

XI. *Euph.* But is it not possible, some men may show as much prejudice and narrowness in rejecting all such accounts, as others might easiness and credulity in admitting them? I never durst make my own observation or experience the rule

and measure of things spiritual, supernatural, or relating to another world, because I should think it a very bad one, even for the visible and natural things of this; it would be judging like the Siamese, who was positive it did not freeze in Holland, because he had never known such a thing as hard water or ice in his own country. I cannot comprehend why any one, who admits the union of the soul and body, should pronounce it impossible for the human nature to be united to the divine, in a manner ineffable and incomprehensible by reason. Neither can I see any absurdity in admitting, that sinful man may become regenerate or a new creature, by the grace of God reclaiming him from a carnal life to a spiritual life of virtue and holiness. And since the being governed by sense and appetite is contrary to the happiness and perfection of a rational creature, I do not at all wonder that we are prescribed self-denial. As for the resurrection of the dead, I do not conceive it so very contrary to the analogy of nature, when I behold vegetables left to rot in the earth, rise up again with new life and vigour, or a worm, to all appearance dead, change its nature, and that, which in its first being crawled on the earth, become a new species, and fly abroad with wings. And, indeed, when I consider that the soul and body are things so very different and heterogeneous, I can see no reason to be positive, that the one must necessarily be extinguished upon the dissolution of the other; especially since I find in myself a strong, natural desire of immortality; and I have not observed that natural appetites are wont to be given in vain, or merely to be frustrated. Upon the whole, those points which you account extravagant and absurd, I dare not pronounce to be so till I see good reason for it.

XII. *Cri.* No, Alciphron, your positive airs must not pass for proofs; nor will it suffice to say, things are contrary to common sense, to make us think they are so: by common sense I suppose should be meant either the general sense of mankind, or the improved reason of thinking men. Now I believe that all those articles you have with so much capacity and fire at once summoned up and exploded, may be shown to be not disagreeable, much less contrary to common sense in one or other of these acceptations. That the gods might appear and converse among men, and that the divinity might inhabit human nature, were points allowed by the heathens: and for this I appeal to their poets and philosophers, whose testimonies are so numerous and clear, that it would be an affront to repeat them to a man of any education. And though the notion of a devil may not be so obvious, or so fully described, yet there appear plain traces of it, either from reason or tradition. The latter Platonists, as Porphyry and Iamblichus, are very clear in the point, allowing that evil demons delude and tempt, hurt and possess mankind. That

the ancient Greeks, Chaldeans, and Egyptians, believed both good and bad angels, may be plainly collected from Plato, Plutarch, and the Chaldean oracles. Origen observes, that almost all the gentiles, who held the being of demons, allowed there were bad ones.* There is even something as early as Homer, that is thought by the learned cardinal Bessarion† to allude to the fall of Satan, in the account of Ate, whom the poet represents as cast down from heaven by Jove, and then wandering about the earth, doing mischief to mankind. This same Ate is said by Hesiod to be the daughter of Discord; and by Euripides, in his Hippolitus, is mentioned as a tempter to evil. And it is very remarkable, that Plutarch in his book, *De Vitando Ære Alieno*, speaks after Empedocles, of certain demons that fell from heaven, and were banished by God, Δαίμονες θεήλατοι καὶ οὐρανοπετεῖς. Nor is that less remarkable which is observed by Ficinus from Pherecydes Syrus, that there had been a downfall of demons who revolted from God; and that Ophioneus (the old serpent) was head of that rebellious crew.‡ Then as to other articles, let any one consider what the Pythagoreans taught of the purgation and λύσις, or deliverance of the soul: what most philosophers, but especially the Stoics, of subduing our passions: what Plato and Hierocles have said of forgiving injuries: what the acute and sagacious Aristotle writes, in his Ethics, to Nicomachus, of the spiritual and divine life, that life which, according to him, is too excellent to be thought human; insomuch as man, so far forth as man, cannot attain to it, but only so far forth as he hath something divine in him: and particularly, let him reflect on what Socrates taught, to wit, that virtue is not to be learned from men, that it is the gift of God, and that good men are not good by virtue of human care or diligence, οὔκ εἶναι ἀνθρωπίνην ἐπιμέλειαν ᾗ ἀγαθοὶ ἀγαθοὶ γίγνονται.§ Let any man who really thinks, but consider what other thinking men have thought, who cannot be supposed prejudiced in favour of revealed religion; and he will see cause, if not to think with reverence of the Christian doctrines of grace, self-denial, regeneration, sanctification, and the rest, even the most mysterious, at least to judge more modestly and warily, than those who shall, with a confident air, pronounce them absurd, and repugnant to the reason of mankind. And in regard to a future state, the common sense of the gentile world, modern or ancient, and the opinions of the wisest men of antiquity, are things so well known, that I need say nothing about them. To me it seems, the minute philosophers, when they appeal to reason and common sense, mean only the sense of their own party: a coin, how current soever among themselves, that other men will bring to the touchstone, and pass

* Origen, lib. vii. contra Celsum.
† In Calumniat. Platonis, lib. iii. c. 7.
‡ Vide Argum. in Phedrum Platonis.
§ Vide Plat. in Protag. et alibi passim.

for no more than it is worth. *Lys.* Be those notions agreeable to what or whose sense they may, they are not agreeable to mine. And if I am thought ignorant for this, I pity those who think me so.

XIII. I enjoy myself, and follow my own courses, without remorse or fear: which I should not do, if my head were filled with enthusiasm; whether gentile or Christian, philosophical or revealed, it is all one to me. Let others know or believe what they can, and make the best of it, I, for my part, am happy and safe in my ignorance. *Cri.* Perhaps not so safe neither. *Lys.* Why, surely you will not pretend that ignorance is criminal? *Cri.* Ignorance alone is not a crime. But that wilful ignorance, affected ignorance, ignorance from sloth, or conceited ignorance, is a fault, might easily be proved by the testimony of heathen writers; and it needs no proof to show, that if ignorance be our fault, we cannot be secure in it as an excuse. *Lys.* Honest Crito seems to hint, that a man should take care to inform himself, while alive, lest his neglect be punished when he is dead. Nothing is so pusillanimous and unbecoming a gentleman, as fear: nor could you take a likelier course to fix and rivet a man of honour in guilt, than by attempting to frighten him out of it. This is the stale, absurd stratagem of priests, and that which makes them, and their religion, more odious and contemptible to me than all the other articles put together. *Cri.* I would fain know why it may not be reasonable for a man of honour, or any man who has done amiss, to fear? Guilt is the natural parent of fear; and nature is not used to make them fear where there is no occasion. That impious and profane men should expect divine punishment, doth not seem so absurd to conceive: and that under this expectation they should be uneasy and even afraid, how consistent soever it may or may not be with honour, I am sure consists with reason. *Lys.* That thing of hell and eternal punishment is the most absurd, as well as the most disagreeable thought that ever entered into the head of mortal man. *Cri.* But you must own that it is not an absurdity peculiar to Christians, since Socrates, that great free-thinker of Athens, thought it probable there may be such a thing as impious men for ever punished in hell.* It is recorded of this same Socrates, that he has been often known to think for four and twenty hours together, fixed in the same posture, and wrapt up in meditation. *Lys.* Our modern free-thinkers are a more lively sort of men. Those old philosophers were most of them whimsical. They had, in my judgment, a dry, narrow, timorous way of thinking, which by no means came up to the frank humour of our times. *Cri.* But I appeal to your own judgment, if a man,

* Vide Platon. in Gorgia.

who knows not the nature of the soul, can be assured by the light of reason, whether it is mortal or immortal?

> An simul intereat nobiscum morte perempta,
> An tenebras orci visat vastasque lacunas?

Lys. But what if I know the nature of the soul? What if I have been taught that whole secret by a modern free-thinker? a man of science who discovered it not by a tiresome introversion of his faculties, not by amusing himself in a labyrinth of notions, or stupidly thinking for whole days and nights together, but by looking into things and observing the analogy of nature.

XIV. This great man is a philosopher by fire, who has made many processes upon vegetables. It is his opinion that men and vegetables are really of the same species: that animals are moving vegetables, and vegetables fixed animals; that the mouths of the one and the roots of the other serve to the same use, differing only in position; that blossoms and flowers answer to the most indecent and concealed parts in the human body; that vegetable and animal bodies are both alike organized, and that in both there is life or a certain motion and circulation of juices through proper tubes or vessels. I shall never forget this able man's unfolding the nature of the soul in the following manner. The soul, said he, is that specific form or principle from whence proceed the distinct qualities or properties of things. Now, as vegetables are a more simple and less perfect compound, and consequently more easily analyzed than animals, we will begin with the contemplation of the souls of vegetables. Know then, that the soul of any plant, rosemary for instance, is neither more nor less than its essential oil. Upon this depends its peculiar fragrance, taste, and medicinal virtues, or in other words its life and operations. Separate or extract this essential oil by chemic art, and you get the soul of the plant: what remains being a dead carcase, without any one property or virtue of the plant, which is preserved entirely in the oil, a drachm whereof goes further than several pounds of the plant. Now this same essential oil is itself a composition of sulphur and salt, or of a gross, unctuous substance, and a fine subtile principle or volatile salt imprisoned therein. This volatile salt is properly the essence of the soul of the plant, containing all its virtue, and the oil is the vehicle of this most subtile part of the soul, or that which fixes and individuates it. And as, upon separation of this oil from the plant, the plant died, so a second death or death of the soul ensues upon the resolution of this essential oil into its principles; as appears by leaving it exposed for some time to the open air, so that the volatile salt or spirit may fly off: after which the oil remains dead and insipid, but without any sensible diminution of its weight, by the loss of that volatile essence of the soul, that ethereal aura, that spark of

entity, which returns and mixes with the solar light, the universal soul of the world, and only source of life, whether vegetable, animal, or intellectual: which differ only according to the grossness or fineness of the vehicles, and the different textures of the natural alembics, or in other words, the organized bodies, where the above-mentioned volatile essence inhabits and is elaborated, where it acts and is acted upon. This chemical system lets you at once into the nature of the soul, and accounts for all its phenomena. In that compound which is called man, the soul or essential oil is what commonly goes by the name of animal spirit: for you must know, it is a point agreed by chemists, that spirits are nothing but the more subtile oils. Now in proportion as the essential oil of man is more subtile than that of other creatures, the volatile salt that impregnates it is more at liberty to act, which accounts for those specific properties and actions of human kind, which distinguish them above other creatures. Hence you may learn why, among the wise ancients, salt was another name for wit, and in our times a dull man is said to be insipid or insulse. Aromatic oils, maturated by great length of time, turn to salts: this shows why human kind grow wiser by age. And what I have said of the twofold death or dissolution, first of the compound, by separating the soul from the organical body, and secondly of the soul itself, by dividing the volatile salt from the oil, illustrates and explains that notion of certain ancient philosophers: that as the man was a compound of soul and body, so the soul was compounded of the mind or intellect, and its ethereal vehicle; and that the separation of soul and body, or death of the man, is, after a long tract of time, sueceeded by a second death of the soul itself, to wit, the separation or deliverance of the intellect from its vehicle, and reunion with the sun. *Euph.* O Lysicles, your ingenious friend has opened a new scene, and explained the most obscure and difficult points in the clearest and easiest manner. *Lys.* I must own this account of things struck my fancy. I am no great lover of creeds or systems: but when a notion is reasonable and grounded on experience I know how to value it. *Cri.* In good earnest, Lysicles, do you believe this account to be true? *Lys.* Why then in good earnest I do not know whether I do or no. But I can assure you the ingenious artist himself has not the least doubt about it. And to believe an artist in his art is a just maxim and short way to science. *Cri.* But what relation hath the soul of man to chemic art? The same reason, that bids me trust a skilful artist in his art, inclines me to suspect him out of his art. Men are too apt to reduce unknown things to the standard of what they know, and bring a prejudice or tincture from things they have been conversant in, to judge thereby of things in which they have not been conversant. I have known a fiddler gravely teach that the soul was harmony; a geo-

metrician very positive that the soul must be extended; and a physician, who having pickled half a dozen embryos and dissected as many rats and frogs, grew conceited, and affirmed there was no soul at all, and that it was a vulgar error. *Lys.* My notions sit easy. I shall not engage in pedantic disputes about them. They who do not like them may leave them. *Euph.* This, I suppose, is said much like a gentleman.

XV. But pray, Lysicles, tell me whether the clergy come within that general rule of yours—that an artist may be trusted in his art? *Lys.* By no means. *Euph.* Why so? *Lys.* Because I take myself to know as much of those matters as they do. *Euph.* But you allow, that in any other profession, one who hath spent much time and pains may attain more knowledge than a man of equal or better parts, who never made it his particular business. *Lys.* I do. *Euph.* And nevertheless in things religious and divine you think all men equally knowing. *Lys.* I do not say all men. But I think all men of sense competent judges. *Euph.* What! are the divine attributes and dispensations to mankind, the true end and happiness of rational creatures, with the means of improving and perfecting their beings, more easy and obvious points than those which make the subject of every common profession? *Lys.* Perhaps not: but one thing I know, some things are so manifestly absurd, that no authority shall make me give in to them. For instance, if all mankind should pretend to persuade me that the Son of God was born upon earth in a poor family, was spit upon, buffeted, and crucified, lived like a beggar and died like a thief, I should never believe one syllable of it. Common sense shows every one, what figure it would be decent for an earthly prince or ambassador to make; and the Son of God, upon an embassy from heaven, must needs have made an appearance beyond all others of great *éclat*, and in all respects the very reverse of that which Jesus Christ is reported to have made, even by his own historians. *Euph.* O Lysicles, though I had ever so much mind to approve and applaud your ingenious reasoning, yet I dare not assent to this for fear of Crito. *Lys.* Why so? *Euph.* Because he observed just now, that men judge of things they do not know, by prejudices from things they do know. And I fear he would object that you, who have been conversant in the *grand monde*, having your head filled with a notion of attendants and equipage and liveries, the familiar badges of human grandeur, are less able to judge of that which is truly divine; and that one who had seen less, and thought more, would be apt to imagine a pompous parade of worldly greatness, not the most becoming the author of a spiritual religion, that was designed to wean men from the world, and raise them above it. *Cri.* Do you think, Lysicles, if a man should make his entrance into London in a rich suit of clothes, with a hundred gilt coaches, and a thousand

laced footmen; that this would be a more divine appearance, and have more of true grandeur in it, than if he had power with a word to heal all manner of diseases, to raise the dead to life, and still the raging of the winds and sea? *Lys.* Without all doubt it must be very agreeable to common sense to suppose, that he could restore others to life who could not save his own. You tell us, indeed, that he rose again from the dead: but what occasion was there for him to die, the just for the unjust, the Son of God for wicked men? And why in that individual place? Why at that very time above all others? Why did he not make his appearance earlier, and preach in all parts of the world, that the benefit might have been more extensive? Account for all these points and reconcile them, if you can, to the common notions and plain sense of mankind. *Cri.* And what if those, as well as many other points, should lie out of the road that we are acquainted with; must we therefore explode them, and make it a rule to condemn every proceeding as senseless, that doth not square with the vulgar sense of man; if the precepts and certain primary tenets of religion appear in the eye of reason good and useful; and if they are also found to be so by their effects; we may, for the sake of them, admit certain other points or doctrines recommended with them, to have a good tendency, to be right and true; although we cannot discern their goodness or truth by the mere light of human reason, which may well be supposed an insufficient judge of the proceedings, counsels, and designs of Providence, and this sufficeth to make our conviction reasonable.

XVI. It is an allowed point that no man can judge of this or that part of a machine taken by itself, without knowing the whole, the mutual relation or dependence of its parts, and the end for which it was made. And, as this is a point acknowledged in corporeal and natural things, ought we not by a parity of reason to suspend our judgment of a single unaccountable part of the divine economy, till we are more fully acquainted with the moral system or world of spirits, and are let into the designs of God's providence, and have an extensive view of his dispensations past, present, and future? Alas! Lysicles, what do you know even of yourself, whence you come, what you are, or whither you are going? To me it seems, that a minute philosopher is like a conceited spectator, who never looked behind the scenes, and yet would judge of the machinery: who from a transient glimpse of a part only of some one scene, would take upon him to censure the plot of a play. *Lys.* As to the plot I will not say; but in half a scene a man may judge of an absurd actor. With what colour or pretext can you justify the vindictive, froward, whimsical behaviour of some inspired teachers or prophets? Particulars that serve neither for profit nor pleasure I make a shift to forget; but in general the truth of this charge I do very

well remember. *Cri.* You need be at no pains to prove a point I shall neither justify nor deny. That there have been human passions, infirmities, and defects in persons inspired by God, I freely own; nay, that very wicked men have been inspired, as Balaam for instance, and Caiaphas, cannot be denied. But what will you infer from thence? Can you prove it impossible, that a weak or sinful man should become an instrument to the Spirit of God, for conveying his purpose to other sinners? Or that divine light may not, as well as the light of the sun, shine on a foul vessel without polluting its rays? *Lys.* To make short work, the right way would be to put out our eyes, and not judge at all. *Cri.* I do not say so, but I think it would be right, if some sanguine persons upon certain points suspected their own judgment. *Alc.* But the very things said to be inspired, taken by themselves and in their own nature, are sometimes so wrong, to say no worse, that a man may pronounce them not to be divine at first sight; without troubling his head about the system of providence or connexion of events: as one may say that grass is green, without knowing or considering how it grows, what uses it is subservient to, or how it is connected with the mundane system. Thus for instance, the spoiling of the Egyptians, and the extirpation of the Canaanites, every one at first glance sees to be cruel and unjust, and may therefore without deliberating pronounce them unworthy of God. *Cri.* But Alciphron, to judge rightly of these things, may it not be proper to consider how long the Israelites had wrought under those severe task-masters of Egypt, what injuries and hardships they had sustained from them, what crimes and abominations the Canaanites had been guilty of, what right God hath to dispose of the things of this world, to punish delinquents, and to appoint both the manner and the instruments of his justice? Man, who has not such right over his fellow-creatures, who is himself a fellow-sinner with them, who is liable to error as well as passion, whose views are imperfect, who is governed more by prejudice than the truth of things, may not improbably deceive himself, when he sets up for a judge of the proceedings of the holy, omniscient, impassive creator and governor of all things.

XVII. *Alc.* Believe me, Crito, men are never so industrious to deceive themselves, as when they engage to defend their prejudices. You would fain reason us out of all use of our reason: can any thing be more irrational? To forbid us to reason on the divine dispensations, is to suppose, they will not bear the test of reason; or, in other words, that God acts without reason, which ought not to be admitted, no, not in any single instance: for if in one, why not in another? Whoever therefore allows a God, must allow that he always acts reasonably. I will not therefore attribute to him actions and proceedings that are unreasonable.

He hath given me reason to judge withal; and I will judge by that unerring light, lighted from the universal lamp of nature. *Cri.* O Alciphron! as I frankly own the common remark to be true, that when a man is against reason, it is a shrewd sign that reason is against him: so I should never go about to dissuade any one, much less one who so well knew the value of it, from using that noble talent. On the contrary, upon all subjects of moment, in my opinion, a man ought to use his reason; but then, whether it may not be reasonable to use it with some deference to superior reason, it will not, perhaps, be amiss to consider. *Alc.* It must surely derogate from the wisdom of God, to suppose his conduct cannot bear being inspected, not even by the twilight of human reason. *Euph.* You allow, then, God to be wise? *Alc.* I do. *Euph.* What! infinitely wise? *Alc.* Even infinitely. *Euph.* His wisdom, then, far exceeds that of man. *Alc.* Vastly. *Euph.* Probably more than the wisdom of man, that of a child. *Alc.* Without all question. *Euph.* What think you, Alciphron, must not the conduct of a parent seem very unaccountable to a child, when its inclinations are thwarted, when it is put to learn the letters, when it is obliged to swallow bitter physic, to part with what it likes, and to suffer, and do, and see many things done contrary to its own judgment, however reasonable or agreeable to that of others? *Alc.* This I grant. *Euph.* Will it not therefore follow from hence, by a parity of reason, that the little child, man, when it takes upon it to judge of the schemes of parental providence, and a thing of yesterday to criticize the economy of the Ancient of days;—will it not follow, I say, that such a judge, of such matters, must be apt to make very erroneous judgments? esteeming those things in themselves unaccountable, which he cannot account for; and concluding of some certain points, from an appearance of arbitrary carriage towards him, which is suited to his infancy and ignorance, that they are in themselves capricious or absurd, and cannot proceed from a wise, just, and benevolent God. This single consideration, if duly attended to, would, I verily think, put an end to many conceited reasonings against revealed religion. *Alc.* You would have us then conclude, that things to our wisdom unaccountable, may nevertheless proceed from an abyss of wisdom which our line cannot fathom; and that prospects viewed but in part, and by the broken, tinged light of our intellects, though to us they may seem disproportionate and monstrous, may nevertheless appear quite otherwise to another eye, and in a different situation: in a word, that as human wisdom is but childish folly, in respect of the divine, so the wisdom of God may sometimes seem foolishness to men.

XVIII. *Euph.* I would not have you make the conclusions, unless in reason you ought to make them: but if they are rea-

sonable, why should you not make them? *Alc.* Some things may seem reasonable at one time, and not at another: and I take this very apology you make for credulity and superstition, to be one of those things. When I view it in its principles, it seems naturally to follow from just concessions; but when I consider its consequences, I cannot agree to it. A man had as good abdicate his nature, as disclaim the use of reason. A doctrine is unaccountable, therefore it must be divine! *Euph.* Credulity and superstition are qualities so disagreeable and degrading to human nature, so surely an effect of weakness, and so frequently a cause of wickedness, that I should be very much surprised to find a just course of reasoning lead to them. I can never think that reason is a blind guide to folly, or that there is any connexion between truth and falsehood, no more than I can think a thing's being unaccountable a proof that it is divine: though at the same time I cannot help acknowledging, it follows from your own avowed principles, that a thing's being unaccountable, or incomprehensible to our reason, is no sure argument to conclude it is not divine; especially when there are collateral proofs of its being so. A child is influenced by the many sensible effects it hath felt, of paternal love and care and superior wisdom, to believe and do several things with an implicit faith and obedience: and if we in the same manner, from the truth and reasonableness which we plainly see in so many points within our cognizance, and the advantages which we experience from the seed of the gospel sown in good ground, were disposed to an implicit belief of certain other points, relating to schemes we do not know, or subjects to which our talents are perhaps disproportionate, I am tempted to think it might become our duty without dishonouring our reason; which is never so much dishonoured as when it is foiled, and never in more danger of being foiled, than by judging where it hath neither means nor right to judge. *Lys.* I would give a good deal, to see that ingenious gamester Glaucus have the handling of Euphranor one night at our club. I own he is a peg too high for me in some of his notions: but then he is admirable at vindicating human reason against the impositions of priestcraft.

XIX. *Alc.* He would undertake to make it as clear as daylight, that there was nothing worth a straw in Christianity, but what every one knew, or might know, as well without as with it, before as since Jesus Christ. *Cri.* That great man, it seems, teacheth, that common sense alone is the pole-star by which mankind ought to steer; and that what is called revelation must be ridiculous, because it is unnecessary and useless, the natural talents of every man being sufficient to make him happy, good, and wise, without any further correspondence with heaven either for light or aid. *Euph.* I have already acknowledged how sen-

sible I am, that my situation in this obscure corner of the country deprives me of many advantages, to be had from the conversation of ingenious men in town. To make myself some amends I am obliged to converse with the dead and my own thoughts, which last I know are of little weight against the authority of Glaucus, or such like great men in the minute philosophy. But what shall we say to Socrates, for he too was of an opinion very different from that ascribed to Glaucus? *Alc.* For the present we need not insist on authorities, ancient or modern, or inquire which was the greater man, Socrates or Glaucus. Though, methinks, for so much as authority can signify, the present times, gray and hoary with age and experience, have a manifest advantage over those that are falsely called ancient. But not to dwell on authorities, I tell you in plain English, Euphranor, we do not want your revelations; and that for this plain reason, those that are clear every body knew before, and those that are obscure nobody is the better for. *Euph.* Whether it was possible for mankind to have known all parts of the Christian religion, besides mysteries and positive institutions, is not the question between us; and that they actually did not know them is too plain to be denied. This, perhaps, was for want of making a due use of reason. But as to the usefulness of revelation, it seems much the same thing whether they could not know, or would not be at the pains to know, the doctrines revealed. And as for those doctrines which were too obscure to penetrate, or too sublime to reach, by natural reason; how far mankind may be the better for them is more, I had almost said, than even you or Glaucus can tell.

XX. *Alc.* But whatever may be pretended as to obscure doctrines and dispensations, all this hath nothing to do with prophecies, which, being altogether relative to mankind, and the events of this world, to which our faculties are surely well enough proportioned, one might expect should be very clear, and such as might inform instead of puzzling us. *Euph.* And yet it must be allowed that, as some prophecies are clear, there are others very obscure; but left to myself, I doubt I should never have inferred from thence that they were not divine. In my own way of thinking I should have been apt to conclude that the prophecies we understand are a proof for inspiration; but that those we do not understand are no proof against it. Inasmuch as for the latter our ignorance or the reserve of the Holy Spirit may account, but for the other nothing, for aught that I see, can account, but inspiration. *Alc.* Now I know several sagacious men, who conclude very differently from you, to wit, that the one sort of prophecies are nonsense, and the other contrived after the events. Behold the difference between a man of free thought and one of narrow principles! *Euph.* It seems then they reject the Revela-

tions because they are obscure, and Daniel's prophecies because they are clear. *Alc.* Either way a man of sense sees cause to suspect there has been foul play. *Euph.* Your men of sense are, it seems, hard to please. *Alc.* Our philosophers are men of piercing eyes. *Euph.* I suppose such men never make transient judgments from transient views; but always establish fixed conclusions upon a thorough inspection of things. For my own part I dare not engage with a man who has examined those points so nicely, as it may be presumed you have done: but I could name some eminent writers of our own, now living, whose books on the subject of prophecy have given great satisfaction to gentlemen who pass for men of sense and learning, here in the country. *Alc.* You must know, Euphranor, I am not at leisure to peruse the learned writings of divines, on a subject which a man may see through with half an eye. To me it is sufficient, that the point itself is odd and out of the road of nature. For the rest I leave them to dispute and settle among themselves where to fix the precise time when the sceptre departed from Judah; or whether in Daniel's prophecy of the Messiah we should compute by the Chaldean or the Julian year. My only conclusion concerning all such matters is, that I will never trouble myself about them. *Euph.* To an extraordinary genius, who sees things with half an eye, I know not what to say: but for the rest of mankind, one would think it should be very rash in them to conclude, without much and exact inquiry, on the unsafe side of a question which concerns their chief interest. *Alc.* Mark it well: a true genius in pursuit of truth makes swift advances on the wings of general maxims, while little minds creep and grovel amidst mean particularities. I lay it down for a certain truth, that, by the fallacious arts of logic and criticism, straining and forcing, palliating, patching, and distinguishing, a man may justify or make out any thing; and this remark, with one or two about prejudice, saves me a world of trouble. *Euph.* You, Alciphron, who soar sublime on strong and free pinions, vouchsafe to lend a helping hand to those whom you behold entangled in the birdlime of prejudice. For my part, I find it very possible to suppose prophecy may be divine, although there should be some obscurity at this distance, with respect to dates of time or kinds of years. You yourself own revelation possible; and allowing this I can very easily conceive it may be odd, and out of the road of nature. I can without amazement meet in holy scripture divers prophecies, whereof I do not see the completion, divers texts I do not understand, divers mysteries above my comprehension, and ways of God to me unaccountable. Why may not some prophecies relate to parts of history I am not well enough acquainted with, or to events not yet come to pass? It seems to me that prophecies unfathomed by the hearer, or even

the speaker himself, have been afterward verified and understood in the event; and it is one of my maxims, that what hath been may be. Though I rub my eyes, and do my utmost to extricate myself from prejudice, yet it still seems very possible to me, that what I do not, a more acute, more attentive, or more learned man may understand: at least thus much is plain; the difficulty of some points or passages doth not hinder the clearness of others, and those parts of scripture which we cannot interpret we are not bound to know the sense of. What evil or what inconvenience, if we cannot comprehend what we are not obliged to comprehend, or if we cannot account for those things which it doth not belong to us to account for? Scriptures not understood at one time, or by one person, may be understood at another time, or by other persons. May we not perceive, by retrospect on what is past, a certain progress from darker to lighter, in the series of the divine economy towards man? And may not future events clear up such points as at present exercise the faith of believers? Now I cannot help thinking (such is the force either of truth or prejudice) that in all this there is nothing strained or forced, or which is not reasonable or natural to suppose.

XXI. *Alc.* Well, Euphranor, I will lend you a helping hand, since you desire it, but think fit to alter my method: for you must know, the main points of Christian belief have been infused so early, and inculcated so often, by nurses, pedagogues, and priests, that, be the proofs ever so plain, it is a hard matter to convince a mind, thus tinctured and stained, by arguing against revealed religion from its internal characters. I shall therefore set myself to consider things in another light, and examine your religion by certain external characters or circumstantials, comparing the system of revelation with collateral accounts of ancient heathen writers, and showing how ill it consists with them. Know then, that the Christian revelation supposing the Jewish, it follows, that if the Jewish be destroyed the Christian must of course fall to the ground. Now, to make short work, I shall attack this Jewish revelation in its head. Tell me, are we not obliged, if we believe the Mosaic account of things, to hold the world was created not quite six thousand years ago? *Euph.* I grant we are. *Alc.* What will you say now, if other ancient records carry up the history of the world many thousand years beyond this period? What if the Egyptians and Chinese have accounts extending to thirty or forty thousand years? What if the former of these nations have observed twelve hundred eclipses, during the space of forty-eight thousand years, before the time of Alexander the Great? What if the Chinese have also many observations antecedent to the Jewish account of the creation? What if the Chaldeans had been observing the stars for above four hundred thousand years? And what shall we say if we have succes-

sions of kings and their reigns, marked for several thousand years before the beginning of the world, assigned by Moses? Shall we reject the accounts and records of all nations, the most famous, ancient, and learned in the world, and preserve a blind reverence for the legislator of the Jews? *Euph.* And pray if they deserve to be rejected, why should we not reject them? What if those monstrous chronologies contain nothing but names without actions and manifest fables? What if those pretended observations of Egyptians and Chaldeans were unknown or unregarded by ancient astronomers? What if the Jesuits have shown the inconsistency of the like Chinese pretensions with the truth of the ephemerides? What if the most ancient Chinese observations allowed to be authentic, are those of two fixed stars, one in the winter solstice, the other in the vernal equinox, in the reign of their king Yao, which was since the flood?* *Alc.* You must give me leave to observe, the Romish missionaries are of small credit in this point. *Euph.* But what knowledge have we, or can we have, of those Chinese affairs, but by their means? The same persons that tell us of these accounts refute them; if we reject their authority in one case, what right have we to build upon it in another? *Alc.* When I consider that the Chinese have annals of more than forty thousand years, and that they are a learned, ingenious, and acute people, very curious, and addicted to arts and sciences, I profess I cannot help paying some regard to their accounts of time. *Euph.* Whatever advantage their situation and political maxims may have given them, it doth not appear they are so learned, or so acute in point of science as the Europeans. The general character of the Chinese, if we may believe Trigaltius and other writers, is, that they are men of a trifling and credulous curiosity, addicted to search after the philosopher's stone, and a medicine to make men immortal, to astrology, fortune-telling, and presages of all kinds. Their ignorance in nature and mathematics is evident, from the great hand the Jesuits make of that kind of knowledge among them. But what shall we think of those extraordinary annals, if the very Chinese themselves give no credit to them for more than three thousand years before Jesus Christ? If they do not pretend to have begun to write history above four thousand years ago? And if the oldest books they have now extant in an intelligible character, are not above two thousand years old? One would think a man of your sagacity, so apt to suspect every thing out of the common road of nature, should not without the clearest proof admit those annals for authentic, which record such strange things as the sun's not setting for ten days, and gold raining three days together. Tell me, Alciphron, can you really believe these things without inquiring by what means the tradition was pre-

* Bianchini Histor. Univers. c. 17.

served, through what hands it passed, or what reception it met with, or who first committed it to writing? *Alc.* To omit the Chinese and their story, it will serve my purpose as well to build on the authority of Manetho, that learned Egyptian priest, who had such opportunities of searching into the most ancient accounts of time, and copying into his dynasties the most venerable and authentic records inscribed on the pillars of Hermes. *Euph.* Pray, Alciphron, where were those chronological pillars to be seen? *Alc.* In the Seriadical land. *Euph.* And where is that country? *Alc.* I do not know. *Euph.* How were those records preserved for so many ages down to the time of this Hermes, who is said to have been the first inventor of letters? *Alc.* I do not know. *Euph.* Did any other writers, before or since Manetho, pretend to have seen, or transcribed, or known any thing about these pillars? *Alc.* Not that I know. *Euph.* Or about the place where they are said to have been. *Alc.* If they did, it is more than I know. *Euph.* Do the Greek authors that went into Egypt, and consulted the Egyptian priests, agree with these accounts of Manetho? *Alc.* Suppose they do not. *Euph.* Doth Diodorus, who lived since Manetho, follow, cite, or so much as mention this same Manetho? *Alc.* What will you infer from all this? *Euph.* If I did not know you and your principles, and how vigilantly you guard against imposture, I should infer that you were a very credulous man. For what can we call it but credulity to believe most incredible things on most slender authority, such as fragments of an obscure writer, disagreeing with all other historians, supported by an obscure authority of Hermes' pillars, for which you must take his word, and which contain things so improbable as successions of gods and demigods, for many thousand years, Vulcan alone having reigned nine thousand? There is little in these venerable dynasties of Manetho, besides names and numbers; and yet in that little we meet with very strange things, that would be thought romantic in another writer: for instance, the Nile overflowing with honey, the moon grown bigger, a speaking lamb, seventy kings who reigned as many days one after another, a king a day.* If you are known, Alciphron, to give credit to these things, I fear you will lose the honour of being thought incredulous. *Alc.* And yet these ridiculous fragments, as you would represent them, have been thought worth the pains and lucubrations of very learned men. How can you account for the work that the great Joseph Scaliger and Sir John Marsham make about them? *Euph.* I do not pretend to account for it. To see Scaliger add another Julian period to make room for such things as Manetho's dynasties, and Sir John Marsham take so much learned pains to piece, patch, and mend those obscure fragments, to range them in synchro-

* Scal. Can. Isag. lib. 2.

nisms, and try to adjust them with sacred chronology, or make them consistent with themselves and other accounts, is to me very strange and unaccountable. Why they, or Eusebius, or yourself, or any other learned man should imagine those things deserve any regard I leave you to explain.

XXII. *Alc.* After all it is not easy to conceive what should move, not only Manetho, but also other Egyptian priests, long before his time, to set up such great pretences to antiquity, all which, however, differing from one another, agree in this, that they overthrow the Mosaic history? How can this be accounted for without some real foundation? What point of pleasure, or profit, or power, could set men on forging successions of ancient names, and periods of time for ages before the world began? *Euph.* Pray, Alciphron, is there any thing so strange or singular in this vain humour of extending the antiquity of nations beyond the truth? Hath it not been observed in most parts of the world? Doth it not, even in our own times, show itself, especially among those dependent and subdued people, who have little else to boast of. To pass over others of our fellow-subjects, who, in proportion as they are below their neighbours in wealth and power, lay claim to a more remote antiquity; are not the pretensions of Irishmen in this way known to be very great? If I may trust my memory, O'Flaherty, in his Ogygia, mentions some transactions in Ireland before the flood. The same humour, and from the same cause, appears to have prevailed in Sicily, a country, for some centuries past, subject to the dominion of foreigners: during which time, the Sicilians have published divers fabulous accounts, concerning the original and antiquity of their cities, wherein they vie with each other. It is pretended to be proved by ancient inscriptions, whose existence or authority seems on a level with that of Hermes' pillars, that Palermo was founded in the days of the patriarch Isaac, by a colony of Hebrews, Phœnicians, and Syrians, and that a grandson of Esau had been governor of a tower subsisting within these two hundred years in that city.* The antiquity of Messina hath been carried still higher, by some who would have us think it was enlarged by Nimrod.† The like pretensions are made by Catania, and other towns of that island, who have found authors of as good credit as Manetho to support them. Now I should be glad to know why the Egyptians, a subdued people, may not probably be supposed to have invented fabulous accounts from the same motive, and, like others, valued themselves on extravagant pretensions to antiquity, when, in all other respects, they were so much inferior to their masters? That people had been successively conquered by Ethiopians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, and Grecians, before it ap-

* Fazelli Hist. Sicul. decad. i. lib. viii. † Reina Notizie Istoriche di Messina.

pears that those wonderful dynasties of Manetho and the pillars of Hermes were ever heard of; as they had been by the two first of those nations before the time of Solon himself, the earliest Greek that is known to have consulted the priests of Egypt: whose accounts were so extravagant, that even the Greek historians, though unacquainted with holy scripture, were far from giving an entire credit to them. Herodotus, making a report upon their authority, saith, those to whom such things seem credible may make the best of them, for himself declaring that it was his purpose to write what he heard.* And both he and Diodorus do, on divers occasions, show the same diffidence in the narratives of those Egyptian priests. And as we observed of the Egyptians, it is no less certain that the Phœnicians, Assyrians, and Chaldeans, were each a conquered and reduced people, before the rest of the world appear to have heard any thing of their pretensions to so remote antiquity. *Cri.* But what occasion is there to be at any pains to account for the humour of fabulous writers? Is it not sufficient to see that they relate absurdities; that they are unsupported by any foreign evidence; that they do not appear to have been in credit, even among their own countrymen, and that they are inconsistent one with another? That men should have the vanity to impose on the world by false accounts, is nothing strange; it is much more so, that after what hath been done towards undeceiving the world by so many learned critics, there should be men found capable of being abused by those paltry scraps of Manetho, Berosus, Ctesias, or the like fabulous or counterfeit writers. *Alc.* Give me leave to observe, those learned critics may prove to be ecclesiastics, perhaps some of them papists. *Cri.* What do you think of Sir Isaac Newton, was he either papist or ecclesiastic? Perhaps you may not allow him to have been in sagacity, or force of mind, equal to the great men of the minute philosophy: but it cannot be denied that he had read and thought much upon the subject, and that the result of his inquiry was a perfect contempt of all those celebrated rivals to Moses. *Alc.* It hath been observed by ingenious men, that Sir Isaac Newton, though a layman, was deeply prejudiced, witness his great regard to the bible. *Cri.* And the same may be said of Mr. Locke, Mr. Boyle, Lord Bacon, and other famous laymen, who, however knowing in some points, must nevertheless be allowed not to have attained that keen discernment, which is the peculiar distinction of your sect.

XXIII. But perhaps there may be other reasons beside prejudice, to incline a man to give Moses the preference, on the truth of whose history the government, manners, and religion of

* Herodotus in Euterpe.

his country were founded and framed; of whose history there are manifest traces in the most ancient books and traditions of the gentiles, particularly of the Brahmins and Parsees; whose history is confirmed by the late invention of arts and sciences, the gradual peopling of the world, the very names of ancient nations, and even by the authority and arguments of that renowned philosopher Lucretius, who, on other points, is so much admired and followed by those of your sect. Not to mention that the continual decrease of fluids, the sinking of hills, and the diminution of planetary motions afford so many natural proofs, which show this world had a beginning; as the civil or historical proofs above-mentioned do plainly point out, this beginning to have been about the time assigned in holy scripture. After all which I beg leave to add one observation more. To any one who considers that, on digging into the earth, such quantities of shells, and, in some places, bones and horns of animals are found, sound and entire after having lain there in all probability some thousands of years; it should seem probable, that gems, medals, and implements in metal or stone, might have lasted entire, buried under ground forty or fifty thousand years, if the world had been so old. How comes it then to pass that no remains are found, no antiquities of those numerous ages preceding the scripture accounts of time; no fragments of buildings, no public monuments, no intaglios, cameos, statues, basso relievos, medals, inscriptions, utensils, or artificial works of any kind, are ever discovered, which may bear testimony to the existence of those mighty empires, those successions of monarchs, heroes, and demi-gods, for so many thousand years? Let us look forward and suppose ten or twenty thousand years to come, during which time we will suppose that plagues, famines, wars, and earthquakes shall have made great havoc in the world; is it not highly probable that at the end of such a period, pillars, vases, and statues now in being of granite, or porphyry, or jasper (stones of such hardness, as we know them to have lasted two thousand years above ground, without any considerable alteration), would bear record of these and past ages? or that some of our current coins might then be dug up, or old walls and the foundations of buildings show themselves, as well as the shells and stones of the primeval world are preserved down to our times. To me it seems to follow from these considerations, which common sense and experience make all men judges of, that we may see good reason to conclude, the world was created about the time recorded in holy scripture. And if we admit a thing so extraordinary as the creation of this world, it should seem that we admit something strange, and odd, and new to human apprehension, beyond any other miracle whatsoever.

XXIV. Alciphron sat musing and made no answer; where-

upon Lysicles expressed himself in the following manner. I must own I should rather suppose with Lucretius, that the world was made by chance, and that men grew out of the earth, like pompions, than pin my faith on those wretched fabulous fragments of oriental history. And as for the learned men, who have taken pains to illustrate and piece them together, they appear to me no better than so many musty pedants. An ingenious free-thinker may perhaps now and then make some use of their lucubrations, and play one absurdity against another. But you are not therefore to think, he pays any real regard to the authority of such apocryphal writers, or believes one syllable of the Chinese, Babylonian, or Egyptian traditions. If we seem to give them a preference before the bible, it is only because they are not established by law. This is my plain sense of the matter, and I dare say it is the general sense of our sect; who are too rational to be in earnest on such trifles, though they sometimes give hints of deep erudition, and put on a grave face to divert themselves with bigots. *Alc.* Since Lysicles will have it so, I am content not to build on accounts of time preceding the Mosaic. I must nevertheless beg leave to observe, there is another point of a different nature, against which there do not lie the same exceptions, that deserves to be considered, and may serve our purpose as well. I presume it will be allowed that historians, treating of times within the Mosaic account, ought by impartial men to be placed on the same foot with Moses. It may therefore be expected, that those, who pretend to vindicate his writings, should reconcile them with parallel accounts of other authors, treating of the same times, things, and persons. And, if we are not attached singly to Moses, but take our notions from other writers, and the probability of things, we shall see good cause to believe, the Jews were only a crew of leprous Egyptians, driven from their country on account of that loathsome distemper; and that their religion, pretended to have been delivered from heaven at mount Sinai, was in truth learned in Egypt, and brought from thence. *Cri.* Not to insist on what cannot be denied, that an historian writing of his own times is to be believed, before others who treat of the same subject several ages after, it seems to me that it is absurd to expect we should reconcile Moses with profane historians, till you have first reconciled them one with another. In answer therefore to what you observe, I desire you would consider in the first place, that Manetho, Chæremon, and Lysimachus had published inconsistent accounts of the Jews, and their going forth from Egypt:* in the second place, that their language is a plain proof they were not of Egyptian, but either of Phœnician, of Syrian, or of Chaldean original: and in the third place, that it doth not seem very probable to suppose

* Joseph. contra Apion. lib. i.

their religion, the basis or fundamental principle of which was the worship of one only supreme God, and the principal design of which was to abolish idolatry, could be derived from Egypt, the most idolatrous of all nations. It must be owned, the separate situation and institutions of the Jews occasioned their being treated by some foreigners with great ignorance and contempt of them and their original. But Strabo, who is allowed to have been a judicious and inquisitive writer, though he was not acquainted with their true history, makes more honourable mention of them. He relates that Moses, with many other worshippers of one infinite God, not approving the image worship of the Egyptians and other nations, went out from Egypt and settled in Jerusalem, where they built a temple to one only God without images.*

XXV. *Alc.* We who assert the cause of liberty against religion, in these later ages of the world, lie under great disadvantages, from the loss of ancient books, which cleared up many points to the eyes of those great men, Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian, which at a greater distance and with less help cannot so easily be made out by us: but, had we those records, I doubt not we might demolish the whole system at once. *Cri.* And yet I make some doubt of this; because those great men, as you call them, with all those advantages could not do it. *Alc.* That must needs have been owing to the dulness and stupidity of the world in those days, when the art of reasoning was not so much known and cultivated as of late: but those men of true genius saw through the deceit themselves, and were very clear in their opinion, which convinces me they had good reason on their side. *Cri.* And yet that great man Celsus seems to have had very slight and inconstant notions: one while, he talks like a thorough Epicurean; another, he admits miracles, prophecies, and a future state of rewards and punishments. What think you, Alciphron, is it not something capricious in so great a man, among other advantages which he ascribes to brutes above human kind, to suppose they are magicians and prophets; that they have a nearer commerce and union with the divinity; that they know more than men; and that elephants, in particular, are of all others most religious animals and strict observers of an oath.† *Alc.* A great genius will be sometimes whimsical. But what do you say to the emperor Julian? was he not an extraordinary man? *Cri.* He seems by his writings to have been lively and satirical. Further, I make no difficulty of owning that he was a generous, temperate, gallant, and facetious emperor: but at the same time it must be allowed, because his own heathen panegyrist Ammianus Marcellinus‡ allows it, that he was a prating,

* Strab. lib. xvi. † Origen, contra Celsum, lib. iv. ‡ Am. Marcellin. lib. xxv.

light, vain, superstitious sort of man. And therefore his judgment or authority can be but of small weight with those who are not prejudiced in his favour. *Alc.* But of all the great men who wrote against revealed religion, the greatest without question was that truly great man Porphyry, the loss of whose invaluable work can never be sufficiently lamented. This profound philosopher went to the bottom and original of things. He most learnedly confuted the scriptures, showed the absurdity of the Mosaic accounts, undermined and exposed the prophecies, and ridiculed allegorical interpretations.* The moderns, it must be owned, have done great things and shown themselves able men; yet I cannot but regret the loss of what was done by a person of such vast abilities, and who lived so much nearer the fountain-head; though his authority survives his writings, and must still have its weight with impartial men, in spite of the enemies of truth. *Cri.* Porphyry, I grant was a thorough infidel, though he appears by no means to have been incredulous. It seems he had a great opinion of wizards and necromancers, and believed the mysteries, miracles, and prophecies of theurgists and Egyptian priests. He was far from being an enemy to obscure jargon; and pretended to extraordinary ecstasies. In a word, this great man appears to have been as unintelligible as a schoolman, as superstitious as a monk, and as fanatical as any Quietist or Quaker; and, to complete his character as a minute philosopher, he was under strong temptations to lay violent hands on himself. We may frame a notion of this patriarch of infidelity, by his judicious way of thinking upon other points as well as the Christian religion. So sagacious was he as to find out, that the souls of insects, when separated from their bodies, become rational: that demons of a thousand shapes assist in making philtrums and charms, whose spiritual bodies are nourished and fattened by the steams of libations and sacrifices: that the ghosts of those, who died violent deaths, use to haunt and appear about their sepulchres. The same egregious philosopher adviseth a wise man not to eat flesh, lest the impure soul of the brute that was put to violent death should enter, along with the flesh, into those who eat it. He adds, as a matter of fact confirmed by many experiments, that those who would insinuate into themselves the souls of such animals, as have the gift of foretelling things to come, need only eat a principal part, the heart for instance of a stag or a mole, and so receive the soul of the animal, which will prophesy in them like a god.† No wonder if men whose minds were preoccupied by faith and tenets of such a peculiar kind should be averse from the reception of the gospel. Upon the whole, we desire to be excused if we do not pay the same defer-

* Luc. Holstenius de Vita et Scriptis Porphyrii.

† Vide Porphyrium de Abstinentia, de Sacrificiis, de Diis, et Dæmonibus.

ence to the judgment of men, that appear to us whimsical, superstitious, weak, and visionary, which those impartial gentlemen do, who admire their talents, and are proud to tread in their footsteps. *Alc.* Men see things in different views; what one admires, another contemns; it is even possible for a prejudiced mind, whose attention is turned towards the faults and blemishes of things, to fancy some shadow of defect in those great lights which in our own days have enlightened, and still continue to enlighten the world.

XXVI. But pray tell me, Crito, what you think of Josephus? He is allowed to have been a man of learning and judgment. He was himself an asserter of revealed religion. And Christians, when his authority serves their turn, are used to cite him with respect. *Cri.* All this I acknowledge. *Alc.* Must it not then seem very strange, and very suspicious to every impartial inquirer, that this learned Jew, writing the history of his own country, of that very place, and those very times, where and when Jesus Christ made his appearance, should yet say nothing of the character, miracles, and doctrine of that extraordinary person? Some ancient Christians were so sensible of this, that, to make amends they inserted a famous passage in that historian; which imposture hath been sufficiently detected by able critics in the last age. *Cri.* Though there are not wanting able critics on the other side of the question, yet, not to enter upon the discussion of that celebrated passage, I am content to give you all you can desire, and suppose it not genuine, but the pious fraud of some wrong-headed Christian, who could not brook the omission in Josephus: but this will never make such omission a real objection against Christianity. Nor is there, for aught I can see, any thing in it whereon to ground either admiration or suspicion; inasmuch as it should seem very natural, supposing the gospel account exactly true, for Josephus to have said nothing of it; considering that the view of that writer was to give his country some figure in the eye of the world, which had been greatly prejudiced against the Jews, and knew little of their history, to which end the life and death of our Saviour would not in any wise have conduced; considering that Josephus could not have been an eye-witness of our Saviour or his miracles; considering that he was a Pharisee of quality and learning, foreign as well as Jewish, one of great employment in the state, and that the gospel was preached to the poor; that the first instruments of spreading it, and the first converts to it were mean and illiterate, that it might not seem the work of man, or beholding to human interest or power: considering the general prejudice of the Jews, who expected in the Messiah a temporal and conquering prince, which prejudice was so strong, that they chose rather to attribute our Saviour's miracles to the devil, than acknowledge him to be the Christ: considering

also the hellish disorder and confusion of the Jewish state in the days of Josephus, when men's minds were filled and astonished with unparalleled wars, dissensions, massacres, and seditions of that devoted people. Laying all these things together, I do not think it strange, that such a man, writing with such a view, at such a time, and in such circumstances, should omit to describe our blessed Saviour's life and death, or to mention his miracles, or to take notice of the state of the Christian church, which was then as a grain of mustard seed beginning to take root and germinate. And this will seem still less strange, if it be considered that the apostles in a few years after our Saviour's death departed from Jerusalem, setting themselves to convert the gentiles, and were dispersed throughout the world; that the converts in Jerusalem were not only of the meanest of the people, but also few; the three thousand, added to the church in one day upon Peter's preaching in that city, appearing to have been not inhabitants but strangers from all parts assembled to celebrate the feast of Pentecost; and that all the time of Josephus and for several years after, during a succession of fifteen bishops, the Christians at Jerusalem observed the Mosaic law,* and were consequently, in outward appearance, one people with the rest of the Jews, which must have made them less observable. I would fain know what reason we have to suppose, that the gospel, which in its first propagation seemed to overlook the great or considerable men of this world, might not also have been overlooked by them, as a thing not suited to their apprehensions and way of thinking? Besides, in those early times might not other learned Jews, as well as Gamaliel, † suspend their judgment of this new way, as not knowing what to make or say of it, being on one hand unable to quit the notions and traditions in which they were brought up, and, on the other, not daring to resist or speak against the gospel, lest they should be found to fight against God? Surely at all events, it could never be expected, that an unconverted Jew should give the same account of the life, miracles, and doctrine of Jesus Christ, as might become a Christian to have given; nor on the other hand was it at all improbable, that a man of sense should beware to lessen or traduce what, for aught he knew, might have been a heavenly dispensation; between which two courses the middle was to say nothing, but pass it over in a doubtful or a respectful silence. And it is observable, that where this historian occasionally mentions Jesus Christ in his account of St. James's death, he doth it without any reflection, or saying either good or bad, though at the same time he shows a regard for the apostle. It is observable, I say, that speaking of Jesus his expression is, "who was called the Christ," not who pretended

* Sulp. Sever. Sacr. Hist. lib. ii., and Euseb. Chron. lib. post.

† Acts v.

to be the Christ, or who was falsely called the Christ, but simply τοῦ λεγομένου Χριστοῦ.* It is evident Josephus knew there was such a man as Jesus, and that he was said to be the Christ, and yet he condemns neither him nor his followers; which to me seems an argument in their favour. Certainly if we suppose Josephus to have known or been persuaded that he was an impostor, it will be difficult to account for his not saying so in plain terms. But if we suppose him in Gamaliel's way of thinking, who suspended his judgment, and was afraid of being found to fight against God, it should seem natural for him to behave in that very manner, which according to you makes against our faith, but I verily think makes for it. But what if Josephus had been a bigot, or even a Sadducee, an infidel, an atheist? What then? we readily grant there might have been persons of rank, politicians, generals, and men of letters, then as well as now, Jews as well as Englishmen, who believed no revealed religion: and that some such persons might possibly have heard of a man in low life, who performed miracles by magic, without informing themselves, or perhaps ever inquiring, about his mission and doctrine. Upon the whole, I cannot comprehend, why any man should conclude against the truth of the gospel, from Josephus's omitting to speak of it, any more than from his omitting to embrace it. Had the first Christians been chief priests and rulers, or men of science and learning, like Philo and Josephus, it might perhaps with better colour have been objected, that their religion was of human contrivance, than now that it hath pleased God by weak things to confound the strong. This I think sufficiently accounts, why in the beginning the gospel might overlook or be overlooked by men of a certain rank and character.

XXVII. *Alc.* And yet it seems an odd argument in proof of any doctrine, that it was preached by simple people to simple people. *Cri.* Indeed if there was no other attestation to the truth of the Christian religion, this must be owned a very weak one. But if a doctrine, begun by instruments, mean as to all human advantages, and making its first progress among those who had neither wealth nor art nor power to grace or encourage it, should in a short time by its own innate excellency, the mighty force of miracles, and the demonstration of the Spirit, not only without, but against, all worldly motives, spread through the world, and subdue men of all ranks and conditions of life, would it not be very unreasonable to reject or suspect it, for the want of human means? And might not this, with much better reason, be thought an argument of its coming from God? *Alc.* But still an inquisitive man will want the testimony of men of learning and knowledge. *Cri.* But from the first century on-

* Jos. Ant. lib. xx. c. 8.

wards, there was never wanting the testimony of such men, who wrote learnedly in defence of the Christian religion, who lived, many of them, when the memory of things was fresh, who had abilities to judge and means to know, and who gave the clearest proofs of their conviction and sincerity. *Alc.* But all the while these men were Christians, prejudiced Christians, and therefore their testimony is to be suspected. *Cri.* It seems then you would have Jews or heathens attest the truths of Christianity. *Alc.* That is the very thing I want. *Cri.* But how can this be? or if it could, would not any rational man be apt to suspect such evidence, and ask, how it was possible for a man really to believe such things himself, and not become a Christian? the apostles and first converts were themselves Jews, and brought up in a veneration for the law of Moses, and in all the prejudices of that people: many fathers, Christian philosophers, and learned apologists for the faith, who had been bred gentiles, were without doubt imbued with prejudices of education: and if the finger of God and force of truth converted both the one and the other from Judaism or gentilism, in spite of their prejudices to Christianity, is not their testimony so much the stronger? You have then the suffrages of both Jews and gentiles, attesting to the truth of our religion in the earliest ages. But to expect or desire the attestation of Jews remaining Jews, or of gentiles remaining gentiles, seems unreasonable: nor can it be imagined that the testimony of men who were not converted themselves, should be the likeliest to convert others. We have indeed the testimony of heathen writers to prove, that about the time of our Saviour's birth there was a general expectation in the east of a Messiah or Prince, who should found a new dominion: that there were such people as Christians: that they were cruelly persecuted and put to death: that they were innocent and holy in life and worship: and that there did really exist in that time certain persons and facts mentioned in the New Testament: and for other points we have learned fathers, several of whom had been, as I already observed, bred heathens, to attest their truth. *Alc.* For my part I have no great opinion of the capacity or learning of the fathers, and many learned men, especially of the reformed churches abroad, are of the same mind, which saves me the trouble of looking myself into their voluminous writings. *Cri.* I shall not take upon me to say, with the minute philosopher Pompanatius,* that Origen, Basil, Augustin, and divers other fathers, were equal to Plato, Aristotle, and the greatest of the gentiles in human knowledge. But if I may be allowed to make a judgment from what I have seen of their writings, I should think several of them men of great parts, eloquence, and learning, and much superior to those who seem to undervalue them. Without any affront to

* Lib. de Immortalitate Animæ.

certain modern critics or translators, Erasmus may be allowed a man of fine taste, and a fit judge of sense and good writing, though his judgment in this point was very different from theirs. Some of our reformed brethren, because the Romanists attribute too much, seem to have attributed too little to them, from a very usual, though no very judicious, opposition; which is apt to lead men to remark defects without making proper allowances, and to say things which neither piety, candour, nor good sense, require them to say.

XXVIII. *Alc.* But though I should acknowledge that a concurring testimony of many learned and able men throughout the first ages of Christianity may have its weight, yet when I consider the great number of forgeries and heresies that sprung up in those times, it very much weakens their credit. *Cri.* Pray, Alciphron, would it be allowed a good argument in the mouth of a papist against the reformation, that many absurd sects sprung up at the same time with it? Are we to wonder that when good seed is sowing the enemy should sow tares? But at once to cut off several objections, let us suppose in fact, what you do not deny possible, that there is a God, a devil, and a revelation from heaven committed to writing many centuries ago. Do but take a view of human nature, and consider what would probably follow from such a supposition; and whether it is not very likely there should be half-believers, mistaken bigots, holy frauds, ambitious, interested, disputing, conceited, schismatical, heretical, absurd men among the professors of such revealed religion, as well as after a course of ages, various readings, omissions, transpositions, and obscurities in the text of the sacred oracles? And if so, I leave you to judge whether it be reasonable to make those events an objection against the being of a thing which would probably and naturally follow upon the supposal of its being? *Alc.* After all, say what you will, this variety of opinions must needs shake the faith of a reasonable man. Where there are so many different opinions on the same point it is very certain they cannot all be true, but it is certain they may all be false. And the means to find out the truth! when a man of sense sets about this inquiry he finds himself on a sudden startled and amused with hard words and knotty questions. This makes him abandon the pursuit, thinking the game not worth the chase. *Cri.* But would not this man of sense do well to consider, it must argue want of discernment to reject divine truths for the sake of human follies? Use but the same candour and impartiality in treating of religion, that you would think proper on other subjects. We desire no more, and expect no less. In law, in physic, in politics, wherever men have refined, is it not evident they have been always apt to run into disputes and chicane? but will that hinder you from admitting there are many good

rules, and just notions, and useful truths in all those professions? Physicians may dispute, perhaps vainly and unintelligibly, about the animal system: they may assign different causes of distempers, some explaining them by the elementary qualities, hot and cold, moist and dry, yet this doth not hinder but the bark may be good for an ague, and rhubarb for a flux. Nor can it others by chemical, others by mechanical principles, be inferred from the different sects which, from time to time, have sprung up in that profession, the dogmatic, for instance, empiric, methodic, Galenic, Paracelsian, or the hard words and knotty questions and idle theories which have grown from them, or been engrafted on them, that therefore we should deny the circulation of the blood, or reject their excellent rules about exercise, air, and diet. *Alc.* It seems you would screen religion by the example of other professions, all which have produced sects and disputes as well as Christianity, which may in itself be true and useful, notwithstanding many false and fruitless notions engrafted on it by the wit of man. Certainly if this had been observed or believed by many acute reasoners, they would never have made the multiplicity of religious opinions and controversies an argument against religion in general. *Cri.* How such an obvious truth should escape men of sense and inquiry I leave you to account: but I can very easily account for gross mistakes in those who pass for free-thinkers without ever thinking; or, if they do think, whose meditations are employed on other points of a very different nature, from a serious and impartial inquiry about religion.

XXIX. But to return: what or where is the profession of men who never split into schisms, or never talk nonsense? Is it not evident, that out of all the kinds of knowledge, on which the human mind is employed, there grow certain excrescences, which may be pared off, like the clippings of hair or nails in the body, and with no worse consequence? Whatever bigots or enthusiasts, whatever notional or scholastic divines may say or think, it is certain the faith derived from Christ and his apostles, was not a piece of empty sophistry; they did not deliver and transmit down to us κενὴν ἀπάτην but γυμνὴν γνώμην, to use the expression of a holy confessor.* And, to pretend to demolish their foundation for the sake of human superstructure, be it hay or stubble or what it will, is no argument of just thought or reason; any more than it is of fairness, to suppose a doubtful sense fixed, and argue from one sense of the question in disputed points. Whether, for instance, the beginning of Genesis is to be understood in a literal or allegorical sense? Whether the book of Job be a history or a parable? being points disputed between Christians, an infidel can have no right to argue from one side of the question, in those or the like cases. This or that

* Soc. Histor. Eccles. lib. i.

tenet of a sect, this or that controverted notion, is not what we contend for at present, but the general faith taught by Christ and his apostles, and preserved by universal and perpetual tradition in all the churches down to our own times. To tax or strike at this divine doctrine, on account of things foreign and adventitious, the speculations and disputes of curious men, is in my mind an absurdity of the same kind, as it would be to cut down a fine tree, yielding fruit and shade, because its leaves afforded nourishment to caterpillars, or because spiders may now and then weave cobwebs among the branches. *Alc.* To divide and distinguish would take time. We have several gentlemen very capable of judging in the gross, but that want of attention for irksome and dry studies or minute inquiries. To which as it would be very hard to oblige men against their will, so it must be a great wrong to the world, as well as themselves, to debar them from the right of deciding according to their natural sense of things. *Cri.* It were to be wished those capable men would employ their judgment and attention on the same objects. If theological inquiries are unpalatable, the field of nature is wide. How many discoveries to be made! how many errors to be corrected in arts and sciences! how many vices to be reformed in life and manners! Why do men single out such points as are innocent and useful, when there are so many pernicious mistakes to be amended? Why set themselves to destroy the hopes of human kind and encouragements to virtue? Why delight to judge where they disdain to inquire? Why not employ their noble talents on the longitude or perpetual motion? *Alc.* I wonder you should not see the difference between points of curiosity and religion. Those employ only men of a genius or humour suited to them; but all mankind have a right to censure, and are concerned to judge of these, except they will blindly submit to be governed by the stale wisdom of their ancestors and the established laws of their country. *Cri.* It should seem, if they are concerned to judge, they are not less concerned to examine before they judge. *Alc.* But after all the examination and inquiry that mortal man can make about revealed religion, it is impossible to come at any rational, sure footing.

XXX. There is indeed, a deal of specious talk about faith founded upon miracles; but when I examine this matter thoroughly, and trace Christian faith up to its original, I find it rests upon much darkness, and scruple, and uncertainty. Instead of points evident or agreeable to human reason, I find a wonderful narrative of the Son of God tempted in the wilderness by the devil, a thing utterly unaccountable, without any end, or use, or reason whatsoever. I meet with strange histories of apparitions of angels and voices from heaven, with surprising accounts of demoniacs, things quite out of the road of common sense or

observation, with several incredible feats said to have been done by divine power, but more probably, the inventions of men; nor the less likely to be so, because I cannot pretend to say with what view they were invented. Designs deeply laid are dark, and the less we know the more we suspect: but, admitting them for true, I shall not allow them to be miraculous, until I thoroughly know the power of what are called second causes and the force of magic. *Cri.* You seem, Alciphron, to analyze, not faith, but infidelity, and trace it to its principles; which, from your own account, I collect to be dark and doubtful scruples and surmises, hastiness in judging and narrowness in thinking, grounded on a fanciful notion which over-rates the little scantling of your own experience, and on real ignorance of the views of Providence, and of the qualities, operations, and mutual respects of the several kinds of beings, which are, or may be, for aught you know, in the universe. Thus obscure, uncertain, conceited, and conjectural are the principles of infidelity. Whereas on the other hand, the principles of faith seem to be points plain and clear. It is a clear point, that this faith in Christ was spread abroad throughout the world soon after his death. It is a clear point, that this was not effected by human learning, politics, or power. It is a clear point, that in the early times of the church there were several men of knowledge and integrity, who embraced this faith, not from any, but against all, temporal motives. It is a clear point, that, the nearer they were to the fountain head, the more opportunity they had to satisfy themselves, as to the truth of these facts which they believed. It is a clear point, that the less interest there was to persuade, the more need there was of evidence to convince them. It is a clear point, that they relied on the authority of those who declared themselves eye-witnesses of the miracles and resurrection of Christ. It is a clear point, that those professed eye-witnesses suffered much for this their attestation, and finally sealed it with their blood. It is a clear point, that these witnesses, weak and contemptible as they were, overcame the world, spread more light, preached purer morals, and did more benefit to mankind, than all the philosophers and sages put together. These points appear to me clear and sure, and, being allowed such, they are plain, just, and reasonable motives of assent; they stand upon no fallacious ground, they contain nothing beyond our sphere, neither supposing more knowledge nor other faculties than we are really masters of; and if they should not be admitted for morally certain, as I believe they will by fair and unprejudiced inquirers, yet the allowing them to be only probable is sufficient to stop the mouth of an infidel. These plains points, I say, are the pillars of our faith, and not those obscure ones by you supposed, which are in truth the unsound, uncertain principles of infidelity, to a rash, prejudiced,

and assuming spirit. To raise an argument, or answer an objection, from hidden powers of nature or magic, is groping in the dark; but by the evident light of sense men might be sufficiently certified of sensible effects, and matters of fact, such as the miracles and resurrection of Christ: and the testimony of such men may be transmitted to after-ages, with the same moral certainty as other historical narrations: and those same miraculous facts, compared by reason with the doctrines they were brought to prove, do afford to an unbiassed mind strong indications of their coming from God, or a superior principle, whose goodness retrieved the moral world, whose power commanded the natural, and whose providence extended over both. Give me leave to say, that nothing dark, nothing incomprehensible, or mysterious, or unaccountable, is the ground or motive, the principle or foundation, the proof or reason of our faith, although it may be the object of it. For it must be owned, that, if by clear and sure principles we are rationally led to believe a point less clear, we do not therefore reject such point, because it is mysterious to conceive, or difficult to account for, nor would it be right so to do. As for Jews and gentiles anciently attributing our Saviour's miracles to magic, this is so far from being a proof against them, that to me it seems rather a proof of the facts, without disproving the cause to which we ascribe them. As we do not pretend to know the nature and operation of demons, the history, laws, and system of rational beings, and the schemes or views of Providence, so far as to account for every action and appearance recorded in the gospel; so neither do you know enough of those things, to be able from that knowledge of yours to object against accounts so well attested. It is an easy matter to raise scruples upon many authentic parts of civil history, which, requiring a more perfect knowledge of facts, circumstances, and councils, than we can come at to explain them, must be to us inexplicable. And this is still more easy with respect to the history of nature, in which, if surmises were admitted for proofs against things odd, strange, and unaccountable, if our scanty experience were made the rule and measure of truth, and all those phenomena rejected, that we, through ignorance of the principles, and laws, and system of nature, could not explain, we should indeed make discoveries, but it would be only of our own blindness and presumption. And why men that are so easily and so often gravelled in common points, in things natural and visible, should yet be so sharp-sighted and dogmatical about the invisible world, and its mysteries, is to me a point utterly unaccountable by all the rules of logic and good sense. Upon the whole, therefore, I cannot help thinking there are points sufficiently plain, and clear, and full, whereon a man may ground a reasonable faith in Christ: but that the attacks of minute phi-

losophers against this faith are grounded upon darkness, ignorance, and presumption. *Alc.* I doubt I shall still remain in the dark as to the proofs of the Christian religion, and always presume there is nothing in them.

XXXI. For how is it possible, at this remote distance, to arrive at any knowledge, or frame any demonstration about it? *Cri.* What then? Knowledge, I grant, in a strict sense, cannot be had without evidence or demonstration; but probable arguments are a sufficient ground of faith. Whoever supposed that scientifical proofs were necessary to make a Christian? Faith alone is required; and provided that, in the main and upon the whole, men are persuaded, this saving faith may consist with some degrees of obscurity, scruple, and error. For although the light of truth be unchangeable, and the same in its eternal source, the Father of lights: yet, with respect to us, it is variously weakened and obscured, by passing through a long distance or gross medium, where it is intercepted, distorted, or tinctured by the prejudices and passions of men. But all this notwithstanding, he that will use his eyes may see enough for the purposes either of nature or of grace; though by a light, dimmer indeed, or clearer, according to the place, or the distance, or the hour, or the medium. And it will be sufficient, if such analogy appears between the dispensations of grace and nature, as may make it probable (although much should be unaccountable in both) to suppose them derived from the same author, and the workmanship of one and the same hand. *Alc.* Those who saw, and touched, and handled, Jesus Christ after his resurrection, if there were any such, may be said to have seen by a clear light: but to us the light is very dim, and yet it is expected we should believe this point as well as they. For my part, I believe with Spinosa, that Christ's death was literal, but his resurrection allegorical.* *Cri.* And for my part, I can see nothing in this celebrated infidel, that should make me desert matters of fact and moral evidence, to adopt his notions. Though I must needs own, I admit an allegorical resurrection that proves the real, to wit, a resurrection of Christ's disciples from weakness to resolution, from fear to courage, from despair to hope, of which, for aught I can see, no rational account can be given, but the sensible evidence that our Lord was truly, really, and literally, risen from the dead: but as it cannot be denied that his disciples, who were eye-witnesses of his miracles and resurrection, had stronger evidence than we can have of those points: so it cannot be denied, that such evidence was then more necessary, to induce men to embrace a new institution, contrary to the whole system of their education, their pre-

* Vide Spinosæ Epist. ad Oldenburgium.

judices, their passions, their interests, and every human motive. Though to me it seems, the moral evidence and probable arguments within our reach, are abundantly sufficient to make prudent, thinking men adhere to the faith handed down to us from our ancestors, established by the laws of our country, requiring submission in points above our knowledge, and for the rest recommending doctrines the most agreeable to our interest and our reason. And, however strong the light might have been at the fountain-head, yet its long continuance and propagation, by such unpromising instruments throughout the world, have been very wonderful. We may now take a more comprehensive view of the connexion, order, and progress of the divine dispensations; and, by a retrospect on a long series of past ages, perceive a unity of design running throughout the whole, a gradual disclosing and fulfilling the purposes of Providence, a regular progress from types to antitypes, from things carnal to things spiritual, from earth to heaven. We may behold Christ crucified, that stumbling-block to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks, putting a final period to the temple worship of the one, and the idolatry of the other, and that stone, which was cut out of the mountain without hands, and brake in pieces all other kingdoms, become itself a great mountain.

XXXII. If a due reflection on these things be not sufficient to beget a reverence for the Christian faith in the minds of men, I should rather impute it to any other cause, than a wise and cautious incredulity: when I see their easiness of faith in the common concerns of life, where there is no prejudice or appetite to bias or disturb their natural judgment: when I see those very men, that in religion will not stir a step without evidence, and at every turn expect demonstration, trust their health to a physician and their lives to a sailor with an implicit faith, I cannot think they deserve the honour of being thought more incredulous than other men, or that they are more accustomed to know, and for this reason less inclined to believe. On the contrary, one is tempted to suspect, that ignorance hath a greater share than science in our modern infidelity, and that it proceeds more from a wrong head, or an irregular will, than from deep researches. *Lys.* We do not, it must be owned, think that learning or deep researches are necessary to pass right judgments upon things. I sometimes suspect that learning is apt to produce and justify whims, and sincerely believe we should do better without it. Our sect are divided on this point, but much the greater part think with me. I have heard more than once very observing men remark, that learning was the true human means which preserved religion in the world; and that if we had it in our power to prefer blockheads in the church, all would soon be right. *Cri.* Men must be strangely in love with their

opinions, to put out their eyes rather than part with them. But it has been often remarked by observing men, that there are no greater bigots than infidels. *Lys.* What, a free-thinker and a bigot, impossible! *Cri.* Not so impossible neither, that an infidel should be bigoted to his infidelity. Methinks I see a bigot, wherever I see a man overbearing and positive without knowing why, laying the greatest stress on points of smallest moment, hasty to judge of the conscience, thoughts, and inward views of other men; impatient of reasoning against his own opinions, and choosing them with inclination rather than judgment, an enemy to learning, and attached to mean authorities. How far our modern infidels agree with this description, I leave to be considered by those who really consider and think for themselves. *Lys.* We are no bigots, we are men that discover difficulties in religion, that tie knots and raise scruples; which disturb the repose and interrupt the golden dreams of bigots, who therefore cannot endure us. *Cri.* They who cast about for difficulties, will be sure to find or make them upon every subject: but he that would, upon the foot of reason, erect himself into a judge, in order to make a wise judgment on a subject of that nature, will not only consider the doubtful and difficult parts of it, but take a comprehensive view of the whole, consider it in all its parts and relations, trace it to its original, examine its principles, effects, and tendencies, its proofs internal and external; he will distinguish between the clear points and the obscure, the certain and the uncertain, the essential and circumstantial, between what is genuine and what foreign: he will consider the different sorts of proof that belong to different things, where evidence is to be expected, where probability may suffice, and where it is reasonable to suppose there should be doubts and scruples: he will proportion his pains and exactness to the importance of the inquiry, and check that disposition of his mind to conclude all those notions, groundless prejudices, with which it was imbued before it knew the reason of them.

He will silence his passions, and listen to truth: he will endeavour to untie knots as well as to tie them, and dwell rather on the light parts of things than the obscure: he will balance the force of his understanding with the difficulty of the subject, and to render his judgment impartial, hear evidence on all sides, and so far as he is led by authority, choose to follow that of the honestest and wisest men. Now it is my sincere opinion, the Christian religion may well stand the test of such an inqury. *Lys.* But such an inquiry would cost too much pains and time. We have thought of another method, the bringing religion to the test of wit and humour: this we find a much shorter, easier, and more effectual way. And as all enemies are at liberty to choose their weapons, we make choice of those we are most expert at:

and we are the better pleased with this choice, having observed that of all things a solid divine hates a jest. To consider the whole of the subject, to read and think on all sides, to object plainly, and answer directly, upon the foot of dry reason and argument, would be a very tedious and troublesome affair. Besides it is attacking pedants at their own weapons. How much more delicate and artful is it, to give a hint, to cover one's self with an enigma, to drop a *double entendre*, to keep it in one's power to recover, and slip aside, and leave his antagonist beating the air? This hath been practised with great success, and I believe it the top method to gain proselytes, and confound pedants. *Cri.* I have seen several things written in this way, which, I suppose, were copied from the behaviour of a sly sort of scorners one may sometimes meet with. Suppose a conceited man that would pass for witty, tipping the wink upon one, thrusting out his tongue at another; one while waggishly smiling, another with a grave mouth and ludicrous eyes; often affecting the countenance of one who smothered a jest, and sometimes bursting out in a horse-laugh: what a figure would this be, I will not say in the senate or council, but in a private visit among well-bred men! And yet this is the figure that certain great authors, who in this age would pass for models, and do pass for models, make in their elaborate writings on the most weighty points. *Alc.* I who profess myself an admirer, an adorer of reason, am obliged to own, that in some cases the sharpness of ridicule can do more than the strength of argument. But if we exert ourselves in the use of mirth and humour, it is not for want of other weapons. It shall never be said, that a free-thinker was afraid of reasoning. No, Crito, we have reasons in store, the best are yet to come; and if we can find an hour for another conference before we set out to-morrow morning, I will undertake you shall be plied with reasons, as clear, and home, and close to the point as you could wish.

THE SEVENTH DIALOGUE.

I. Christian faith impossible. II. Words stand for ideas. III. No knowledge or faith without ideas. IV. Grace, no idea of it. V. Abstract ideas what, and how made. VI. Abstract general ideas impossible. VII. In what sense there may be general ideas. VIII. Suggesting ideas not the only use of words. IX. Force as difficult to form an idea of, as grace. X. Notwithstanding which, useful propositions may be formed concerning it. XI. Belief of the Trinity and other mysteries not absurd. XII. Mistakes about faith an occasion of profane raillery. XIII. Faith, its true nature and effects. XIV. Illustrated by science. XV. By arithmetic in particular. XVI. Sciences conversant about signs. XVII. The true end of speech, reason, science, and faith. XVIII. Metaphysical objections as strong against human science as articles of faith. XIX. No religion, because no human liberty. XX. Further proof against human liberty. XXI. Fatalism a consequence of erroneous suppositions. XXII. Man an accountable agent. XXIII. Inconsistency, singularity, and credulity of minute philosophers. XXIV. Untrodden paths and new light of the minute philosophers. XXV. Sophistry of the minute philosophers. XXVI. Minute philosophers ambiguous, enigmatical, unfathomable. XXVII. Scepticism of the minute philosophers. XXVIII. How a sceptic ought to behave. XXIX. Minute philosophers, why difficult to convince. XXX. Thinking, not the epidemical evil of these times. XXXI. Infidelity, not an effect of reason or thought: its true motives assigned. XXXII. Variety of opinions about religion, effects thereof. XXXIII. Method for proceeding with minute philosophers. XXXIV. Want of thought, and want of education, defects of the present age.

I. THE philosophers having resolved to set out for London next morning, we assembled at break of day in the library. Alciphron began with a declaration of his sincerity, assuring us he had very maturely and with a most unbiassed mind considered all that had been said the day before. He added that upon the whole he could not deny several probable reasons were produced for embracing the Christian faith. But, said he, those reasons, being only probable, can never prevail against absolute certainty and demonstration. If therefore I can demonstrate your religion to be a thing altogether absurd and inconsistent, your probable arguments in its defence do from that moment lose their force, and with it all right to be answered or considered. The concurring testimony of sincere and able witnesses hath without question great weight in human affairs. I will even grant that things odd and unaccountable to human judgment or experience, may sometimes claim our assent on that sole motive. And I will also grant it possible, for a tradition to be conveyed with moral evidence through many centuries. But at the same time you will grant to me, that a thing demonstrably and palpably false is not to be admitted on any testimony whatever, which at best can never amount to demonstration. To be plain, no testimony can make nonsense sense; no moral evidence can make contradictions consistent. Know then, that as the strength of our cause doth not depend upon, so neither is it to be decided by any critical points of history, chronology, or languages. You are not to wonder, if the same sort of tradition and moral proof, which

governs our assent with respect to facts in civil or natural history, is not admitted as a sufficient voucher for metaphysical absurdities and absolute impossibilities. Things obscure and unaccountable in human affairs, or the operations of nature, may yet be possible, and, if well attested, may be assented unto: but religious assent or faith can be evidently shown in its own nature to be impracticable, impossible, and absurd. This is the primary motive to infidelity. This is our citadel and fortress, which may, indeed, be graced with outworks of various erudition, but, if those are demolished, remains in itself and of its own proper strength impregnable. *Euph.* This, it must be owned, reduceth our inquiry within a narrow compass: do but make out this, and I shall have nothing more to say. *Alc.* Know then, that the shallow mind of the vulgar, as it dwells only on the outward surface of things, and considers them in the gross, may be easily imposed on. Hence a blind reverence for religious faith and mystery. But when an acute philosopher comes to dissect and analyze these points, the imposture plainly appears: and as he has no blindness, so he hath no reverence for empty notions, or, to speak more properly, for mere forms of speech, which mean nothing, and are of no use to mankind.

II. Words are signs: they do or should stand for ideas; which so far as they suggest they are significant. But words that suggest no ideas are insignificant. He who annexeth a clear idea to every word he makes use of speaks sense; but where such ideas are wanting, the speaker utters nonsense. In order therefore to know whether any man's speech be senseless and insignificant, we have nothing to do but lay aside the words and consider the ideas suggested by them. Men, not being able immediately to communicate their ideas one to another, are obliged to make use of sensible signs or words; the use of which is to raise those ideas in the hearer, which are in the mind of the speaker; and if they fail of this end they serve to no purpose. He who really thinks hath a train of ideas succeeding each other and connected in his mind: and when he expresseth himself by discourse, each word suggests a distinct idea to the hearer or reader; who by that means hath the same train of ideas in his, which was in the mind of the speaker or writer. As far as this effect is produced, so far the discourse is intelligible, hath sense and meaning. Hence it follows, that whoever can be supposed to understand what he reads or hears must have a train of ideas raised in his mind, correspondent to the train of words read or heard. These plain truths, to which men readily assent in theory, are but little attended to in practice, and therefore deserve to be enlarged on and inculcated, however obvious and undeniable. Mankind are generally averse from thinking, though apt enough to entertain discourse either in themselves or others: the effect whereof is, that their

minds are rather stored with names than ideas, the husk of science rather than the thing. And yet these words without meaning do often make distinctions of parties, the subject matter of their disputes, and the object of their zeal. This is the most general cause of error, which doth not influence ordinary minds alone, but even those who pass for acute and learned philosophers are often employed about names instead of things or ideas, and are supposed to know when they only pronounce hard words without a meaning.

III. Though it is evident that as knowledge is the perception of the connexion or disagreement between ideas, he who doth not distinctly perceive the ideas marked by the terms, so as to form a mental proposition answering to the verbal, cannot possibly have knowledge; no more can he be said to have opinion or faith, which imply a weaker assent, but still it must be to a proposition, the terms of which are understood as clearly, although the agreement or disagreement of the ideas may not be so evident, as in the case of knowledge. I say, all degrees of assent, whether founded on reason or authority, more or less cogent, are internal acts of the mind which alike terminate in ideas as their proper object: without which there can be really no such thing as knowledge, faith, or opinion. We may perhaps raise a dust and disputes about tenets purely verbal; but what is this at bottom more than mere trifling? All which will be easily admitted with respect to human learning and science; wherein it is an allowed method to expose any doctrine or tenet by stripping them of the words, and examining what ideas are underneath, or whether any ideas at all? This is often found the shortest way to end disputes which might otherwise grow and multiply without end, the litigants neither understanding one another nor themselves. It were needless to illustrate what shines by its own light, and is admitted by all thinking men. My endeavour shall be only to apply it in the present case. I suppose I need not be at any pains to prove, that the same rules of reason and good sense which obtain in all other subjects ought to take place in religion. As for those who consider faith and reason as two distinct provinces, and would have us think good sense has nothing to do where it is most concerned, I am resolved never to argue with such men, but leave them in quiet possession of their prejudices. And now, for the particular application of what I have said, I shall not single out any nice disputed points of school divinity, or those that relate to the nature and essence of God, which being allowed infinite, you might pretend to screen them under the general notion of difficulties attending the nature of infinity.

IV. Grace is the main point in the Christian dispensation: nothing is oftener mentioned or more considered throughout the New Testament; wherein it is represented as somewhat of a very

particular kind, distinct from any thing revealed to the Jews, or known by the light of nature. This same grace is spoken of as the gift of God, as coming by Jesus Christ, as reigning, as abounding, as operating. Men are said to speak through grace, to believe through grace. Mention is made of the glory of grace, the riches of grace, the stewards of grace. Christians are said to be heirs of grace, to receive grace, grow in grace, be strong in grace, to stand in grace, and to fall from grace. And lastly, grace is said to justify and to save them. Hence Christianity is styled the covenant or dispensation of grace. And it is well known that no point hath created more controversy in the church than this doctrine of grace. What disputes about its nature, extent, and effects, about universal, efficacious, sufficient, preventing, irresistible grace have employed the pens of protestant as well as popish divines, of Jansenists, and Molinists, of Lutherans, Calvinists, and Arminians, as I have not the least curiosity to know, so I need not say. It sufficeth to observe, that there have been and are still subsisting great contests upon these points. Only one thing I should desire to be informed of, to wit, what is the clear and distinct idea marked by the word grace? I presume a man may know the bare meaning of a term, without going into the depth of all those learned inquiries. This surely is an easy matter, provided there is an idea annexed to such term. And if there is not, it can be neither the subject of a rational dispute, nor the object of real faith. Men may indeed impose upon themselves or others, and pretend to argue and believe, when at bottom there is no argument or belief, further than mere verbal trifling. Grace, taken in the vulgar sense, either for beauty or favour, I can easily understand. But when it denotes an active, vital, ruling principle, influencing and operating on the mind of man, distinct from every natural power or motive, I profess myself altogether unable to understand it, or frame any distinct idea of it; and therefore I cannot assent to any proposition concerning it, nor consequently have any faith about it: and it is a self-evident truth, that God obligeth no man to impossibilities. At the request of a philosophical friend, I did cast an eye on the writings he showed me of some divines, and talked with others on this subject, but after all I had read or heard could make nothing of it, having always found, whenever I laid aside the word grace, and looked into my own mind, a perfect vacuity or privation of all ideas. And, as I am apt to think men's minds and faculties are made much alike, I suspect that other men, if they examined what they call grace with the same exactness and indifference, would agree with me that there was nothing in it but an empty name. This is not the only instance, where a word often heard and pronounced is believed intelligible, for no other reason but because it is familiar. Of the same kind are many

other points reputed necessary articles of faith. That which in the present case imposeth upon mankind I take to be partly this. Men speak of this holy principle as of something that acts, moves, and determines, taking their ideas from corporeal things, from motion and the force or momentum of bodies, which being of an obvious and sensible nature they substitute in place of a thing spiritual and incomprehensible, which is a manifest delusion. For though the idea of corporeal force be never so clear and intelligible, it will not therefore follow that the idea of grace, a thing perfectly incorporeal, must be so too. And though we may reason distinctly, perceive, assent, and form opinions about the one, it will by no means follow that we can do so of the other. Thus it comes to pass, that a clear, sensible idea of what is real produceth, or rather is made a pretence for, an imaginary spiritual faith that terminates in no object; a thing impossible! For there can be no assent where there are no ideas: and where there is no assent there can be no faith: and what cannot be, that no man is obliged to. This is as clear as any thing in Euclid.

V. The same method of reasoning may be applied by any man of sense, to confute all other the most essential articles of the Christian faith. You are not therefore to wonder that a man who proceeds on such solid grounds, such clear and evident principles, should be deaf to all you can say from moral evidence, or probable arguments, which are nothing in the balance against demonstration. *Euph.* The more light and force there is in this discourse, the more you are to blame for not having produced it sooner. For my part I should never have said one word against evidence. But let me see whether I understand you rightly. You say, every word in an intelligible discourse must stand for an idea; which ideas, as far as they are clearly and distinctly apprehended, so far the discourse hath meaning, without which it is useless and insignificant. *Alc.* I do. *Euph.* For instance, when I hear the words man, triangle, colour, pronounced, they must excite in my mind distinct ideas of those things whereof they are signs, otherwise I cannot be said to understand them. *Alc.* Right. *Euph.* And this is the only true use of language. *Alc.* That is what I affirm. *Euph.* But every time the word man occurs in reading or conversation, I am not conscious that the particular distinct idea of a man is excited in my mind. For instance, when I read in St. Paul's epistle to the Galatians these words: "If a man thinketh himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself." Methinks I comprehend the force and meaning of this proposition, although I do not frame to myself the particular distinct idea of a man. *Alc.* It is very true, you do not form in your mind the particular idea of Peter, James, or John, of a fair or a black, a tall or a low, a fat or a lean, a straight or a crooked, a wise or a foolish, a sleeping or

waking man, but the abstract general idea of man, prescinding from, and exclusive of all particular shape, size, complexion, passions, faculties, and every individual circumstance. To explain this matter more fully, you are to understand there is in the human mind a faculty of contemplating the general nature of things separate from all those particularities which distinguish the individuals one from another. For example, in Peter, James, and John, you may observe in each a certain collection of stature, figure, colour, and other peculiar properties by which they are known asunder, distinguished from all other men, and, if I may so say, individuated. Now leaving out of the idea of a man that which is peculiar to the individual, and retaining only that which is common to all men, you form an abstract universal idea of man or human nature, which includes no particular stature, shape, colour, or other quality whether of mind or body. After the same manner you may observe particular triangles to differ one from another, as their sides are equal or unequal, and their angles greater or lesser; whence they are denominated equilateral, equicrural, or scalenum, obtusangular, acutangular, or rectangular. But the mind, excluding out of its idea all these peculiar properties and distinctions, frameth the general abstract idea of a triangle; which is neither equilateral, equicrural, nor scalenum, neither obtusangular, acutangular, nor rectangular, but all and none of these at once.* The same may be said of the general abstract idea of colour, which is something distinct from and exclusive of blue, red, green, yellow, and every other particular colour, including only that general essence in which they all agree. And what has been said of these three general names, and the abstract general ideas they stand for, may be applied to all others. For you must know, that particular things or ideas being infinite, if each were marked or signified by a distinct proper name, words must have been innumerable, and language an endless, impossible thing. Hence it comes to pass, that appellative or general names stand, immediately and properly, not for particular but for abstract general ideas, which they never fail to excite in the mind as oft as they are used to any significant purpose. And without this there could be no communication or enlargement of knowledge, no such thing as universal science or theorems of any kind. Now for understanding any proposition or discourse it is sufficient that distinct ideas are thereby raised in your mind, correspondent to those in the speaker's, whether the ideas so raised are particular or only abstract and general ideas. Forasmuch, nevertheless, as these are not so obvious and familiar to vulgar minds, it happens that some men may think they have no idea at all, when they have not a particular idea; but the truth is, you had the abstract general idea of man, in the

* See Locke on Human Understanding, b. iv. c. 7.

instance assigned, wherein you thought you had none. After the same manner, when it is said that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right ones; or that colour is the object of sight, it is evident the words do not stand for this or that triangle or colour, but for abstract general ideas, excluding every thing peculiar to the individuals, and including only the universal nature common to the whole kind of triangles or of colours.

VI. *Euph.* Tell me, Alciphron, are those abstract general ideas clear and distinct? *Alc.* They are, above all others, clear and distinct, being the only proper object of science, which is altogether conversant about universals. *Euph.* And do you not think it very possible for any man to know, whether he has this or that clear and distinct idea or no? *Alc.* Doubtless. To know this he needs only examine his own thoughts, and look into his own mind. *Euph.* But upon looking into my own mind I do not find that I have or can have these general abstract ideas of a man or a triangle above-mentioned, or of colour prescinded from all particular colours.* Though I shut mine eyes, and use mine utmost efforts, and reflect on all that passeth in my own mind, I find it utterly impossible to form such ideas. *Alc.* To reflect with due attention and turn the mind inward upon itself is a difficult task, and not every one's talent. *Euph.* Not to insist on what you allowed, that every one might easily know for himself whether he has this or that idea or no: I am tempted to think nobody else can form those ideas any more than I can. Pray, Alciphron, which are those things you would call absolutely impossible? *Alc.* Such as include a contradiction. *Euph.* Can you frame an idea of what includes a contradiction? *Alc.* I cannot. *Euph.* Consequently whatever is absolutely impossible you cannot form an idea of. *Alc.* This I grant. *Euph.* But can a colour or triangle, such as you describe their abstract general ideas, really exist? *Alc.* It is absolutely impossible such things should exist in nature. *Euph.* Should it not follow, then, that they cannot exist in your mind, or, in other words, that you cannot conceive or frame an idea of them? *Alc.* You seem, Euphranor, not to distinguish between pure intellect and imagination. Abstract general ideas I take to be the object of pure intellect, which may conceive them although they cannot perhaps be imagined. *Euph.* I do not perceive that I can by any faculty, whether of intellect or imagination, conceive or frame an idea of that which is impossible, and includes a contradiction. And I am very much at a loss to account for your admitting that in common instances which you would make an argument against divine faith and mysteries.

VII. *Alc.* There must be some mistake in this. How is it

* See Introduction to the Treatise concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge, where the absurdity of abstract ideas is fully considered, p. 75.

possible there should be general knowledge without general propositions, or these without general names, which cannot be without general ideas, by standing for which they become general? *Euph.* But may not words become general, by being made to stand indiscriminately for all particular ideas, which from a mutual resemblance belong to the same kind, without the intervention of any abstract general idea? *Alc.* Is there then no such thing as a general idea? *Euph.* May we not admit general ideas, though we should not admit them to be made by abstraction, or though we should not allow of general abstract ideas? To me it seems, a particular idea may become general by being used to stand for or represent other ideas; and that general knowledge is conversant about signs or general ideas made such by their signification; and which are considered rather in their relative capacity, and as substituted for others, than in their own nature, or for their own sake. A black line, for instance, an inch long, though in itself particular, may yet become universal, being used as a sign to stand for any line whatsoever. *Alc.* It is your opinion then, that words become general by representing an indefinite number of particular ideas. *Euph.* It seems so to me. *Alc.* Whenever therefore I hear a general name, it must be supposed to excite some one or other particular idea of that species in my mind. *Euph.* I cannot say so neither. Pray, Alciphron, doth it seem to you necessary, that as often as the word *man* occurs in reading or discourse, you must form in your mind the idea of a particular man? *Alc.* I own, it doth not: and not finding particular ideas always suggested by the words, I was led to think I had abstract general ideas suggested by them. And this is the opinion of all thinking men, who are agreed, the only use of words is to suggest ideas. And indeed what other use can we assign them?

VIII. *Euph.* Be the use of words or names what it will, I can never think it is to do things impossible. Let us then inquire what it is; and see if we can make sense of our daily practice. Words, it is agreed, are signs: it may not therefore be amiss to examine the use of other signs in order to know that of words. Counters, for instance, at a card-table are used, not for their own sake, but only as signs substituted for money as words are for ideas. Say now, Alciphron, is it necessary every time these counters are used throughout the whole progress of a game, to frame an idea of the distinct sum or value that each represents? *Alc.* By no means: it is sufficient the players at first agree on their respective values, and at last substitute those values in their stead. *Euph.* And in casting up a sum, where the figures stand for pounds, shillings, and pence, do you think it necessary, throughout the whole progress of the operation, in each step to form ideas of pounds, shillings, and pence? *Alc.* I do not, it

will suffice if in the conclusion those figures direct our actions with respect to things. *Euph.* From hence it seems to follow that words may not be insignificant, although they should not, every time they are used, excite the ideas they signify in our minds, it being sufficient, that we have it in our power to substitute things or ideas for their signs when there is occasion. It seems also to follow, that there may be another use of words, besides that of marking and suggesting distinct ideas, to wit, the influencing our conduct and actions; which may be done either by forming rules for us to act by, or by raising certain passions, dispositions, and emotions in our minds. A discourse, therefore, that directs how to act or excites to the doing or forbearance of an action may, it seems, be useful and significant, although the words whereof it is composed should not bring each a distinct idea into our minds. *Alc.* It seems so. *Euph.* Pray tell me, Alciphron, is not an idea altogether inactive? *Alc.* It is. *Euph.* An agent therefore, an active mind, or spirit, cannot be an idea or like an idea. Whence it should seem to follow, that those words which denote an active principle, soul, or spirit, do not in a strict and proper sense stand for ideas: and yet they are not insignificant neither: since I understand what is signified by the term I, or myself, or know what it means, although it be no idea, nor like an idea, but that which thinks, and wills, and apprehends ideas and operates about them. *Alc.* What would you infer from this? *Euph.* What hath been inferred already, that words may be significant although they do not stand for ideas.* The contrary whereof having been presumed seems to have produced the doctrine of abstract ideas. *Alc.* Will you not allow then that the mind can abstract? *Euph.* I do not deny it may abstract in a certain sense, inasmuch as those things that can really exist, or be really perceived asunder, may be conceived asunder, or abstracted one from the other; for instance, a man's head from his body, colour from motion, figure from weight. But it will not thence follow, that the mind can frame abstract general ideas, which appear to be impossible. *Alc.* And yet it is a current opinion, that every substantive name marks out and exhibits to the mind one distinct idea separate from all others. *Euph.* Pray, Alciphron, is not the word *number* such a substantive name? *Alc.* It is. *Euph.* Do but try now whether you can frame an idea of number in abstract, exclusive of all signs, words, and things numbered. I profess for my own part I cannot. *Alc.* Can it be so hard a matter to form a simple idea of number, the object of a most evident demonstrable science? Hold, let me see, if I cannot abstract the idea of number from the numeral names and characters, and all particular numerable things. Upon which Alciphron paused a while and then said:

* See the Principles of Human Knowledge, Sect. cxxxv., and the Introduction, Sect. xx.

To confess the truth I do not find that I can. *Euph.* But though it seems, neither you nor I can form distinct simple ideas of number, we can nevertheless make a very proper and significant use of numeral names. They direct us in the disposition and management of our affairs, and are of such necessary use, that we should not know how to do without them. And yet, if other men's faculties may be judged of by mine, to attain a precise, simple, abstract idea of number, is as difficult as to comprehend any mystery in religion.

IX. But to come to your own instance, let us examine what idea we can frame of force abstracted from body, motion, and outward sensible effects. For myself, I do not find that I have or can have any such idea. *Alc.* Surely every one knows what is meant by force. *Euph.* And yet I question whether every one can form a distinct idea of force. Let me entreat you, Alciphron, be not amused by terms, lay aside the word force, and exclude every other thing from your thoughts, and then see what precise idea you have of force. *Alc.* Force is that in bodies which produceth motion and other sensible effects. *Euph.* It is then something distinct from those effects. *Alc.* It is. *Euph.* Be pleased now to exclude the consideration of its subject and effects, and contemplate force itself in its own precise idea. *Alc.* I profess I find it no such easy matter. *Euph.* Take your own advice, and shut your eyes to assist your meditation. Upon this Alciphron having closed his eyes, and mused a few minutes, declared he could make nothing of it. And that, replied Euphranor, which it seems neither you nor I can frame an idea of, by your own remark of men's minds and faculties being made much alike, we may suppose others have no more idea of than we. *Alc.* We may. *Euph.* But notwithstanding all this, it is certain there are many speculations, reasonings, and disputes, refined subtilties and nice distinctions about this same force. And to explain its nature, and distinguish the several notions or kinds of it, the terms gravity, reaction, *vis inertiæ, vis insita, vis impressa, vis mortua, vis viva, impetus, momentum, solicitatio, conatus,* and divers other such like expressions have been used by learned men: and no small controversies have arisen about the notions or definitions of these terms. It had puzzled men to know whether force is spiritual or corporeal, whether it remains after action, how it is transferred from one body to another. Strange paradoxes have been framed about its nature, properties, and proportions: for instance, that contrary forces may at once subsist in the same quiescent body: that the force of percussion in a small particle is infinite: for which and other curiosities of the same sort, you may consult *Borellus de Vi Percussionis,* the *Lezioni Academiche* of Toricelli, the exercitations of Hermanus, and other writers. It is well known to the learned world, what a controversy hath been carried on between mathematicians, particularly Monsieur Leibnitz and

Monsieur Papin, in the *Leipsic Acta Eruditorum*, about the proportion of forces, whether they be each to other in a proportion compounded of the simple proportions of the bodies and the celerities, or in one compounded of the simple proportion of the bodies and the duplicate proportion of the celerities? A point, it seems, not yet agreed: as indeed the reality of the thing itself is made a question. Leibnitz distinguisheth between the *nisus elementaris*, and the *impetus*, which is formed by a repetition of the *nisus elementaris*, and seems to think they do not exist in nature, but are made only by an abstraction of the mind. The same author, treating of original, active force, to illustrate his subject hath recourse to the substantial forms and *entelecheia* of Aristotle. And the ingenious Toricelli saith of force and impetus, that they are subtile abstracts and spiritual quintessences; and concerning the *momentum* and the velocity of heavy bodies falling, he saith they are *un certo che*, and *un non so che*, that is in plain English, he knows not what to make of them. Upon the whole therefore, may we not pronounce, that excluding body, time, space, motion, and all its sensible measures and effects, we shall find it as difficult to form an idea of force as of grace? *Alc.* I do not know what to think of it.

X. *Euph.* And yet, I presume, you allow there are very evident propositions or theorems relating to force, which contain useful truths: for instance, that a body with conjunct forces describes the diagonal of a parallelogram, in the same time that it would the sides with separate. Is not this a principle of very extensive use? Doth not the doctrine of the composition and resolution of forces depend upon it, and, in consequence thereof, numberless rules and theorems directing men how to act, and explaining phenomena throughout the mechanics and mathematical philosophy? And if, by considering this doctrine of force, men arrive at the knowledge of many inventions in mechanics, and are taught to frame engines by means of which things difficult and otherwise impossible may be performed, and if the same doctrine, which is so beneficial here below, serveth also as a key to discover the nature of the celestial motions, shall we deny that it is of use, either in practice or speculation, because we have no distinct idea of force? Or that which we admit with regard to force, upon what pretence can we deny concerning grace? If there are queries, disputes, perplexities, diversity of notions and opinions about the one, so there are about the other also: if we can form no precise, distinct idea of the one, so neither can we of the other. Ought we not therefore, by a parity of reason, to conclude, there may be divers true and useful propositions concerning the one as well as the other? And that grace may be an object of our faith, and influence our life and actions, as a principle destructive of evil habits and productive of good ones, although we cannot attain a distinct idea of it, separate or abstracted from

God the author, from man the subject, and from virtue and piety its effects?

XI. Shall we not admit the same method of arguing, the same rules of logic, reason, and good sense, to obtain in things spiritual and things corporeal, in faith and science, and shall we not use the same candour, and make the same allowances, in examining the revelations of God and the inventions of men? For aught I see, that philosopher cannot be free from bias and prejudice, or be said to weigh things in an equal balance who shall maintain the doctrine of force and reject that of grace, who shall admit the abstract idea of a triangle, and at the same time ridicule the holy Trinity. But, however partial or prejudiced other minute philosophers might be, you have laid down for a maxim, that the same logic which obtains in other matters must be admitted in religion. *Lys.* I think, Alciphron, it would be more prudent to abide by the way of wit and humour, than thus to try religion by the dry test of reason and logic. *Alc.* Fear not: by all the rules of right reason it is absolutely impossible that any mystery, and least of all the Trinity, should really be the object of man's faith. *Euph.* I do not wonder you thought so, as long as you maintained that no man could assent to a proposition, without perceiving or framing in his mind distinct ideas marked by the terms of it. But although terms are signs, yet having granted that those signs may be significant, though they should not suggest ideas represented by them, provided they serve to regulate and influence our wills, passions, or conduct, you have consequently granted, that the mind of man may assent to propositions containing such terms, when it is so directed or affected by them, notwithstanding it should not perceive distinct ideas marked by those terms. Whence it seems to follow, that a man may believe the doctrine of the Trinity, if he finds it revealed in holy scripture, that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are God, and that there is but one God? Although he doth not frame in his mind any abstract or distinct ideas of Trinity, substance, or personality, provided, that this doctrine of a creator, redeemer, and sanctifier makes proper impressions on his mind, producing therein love, hope, gratitude, and obedience, and thereby becomes a lively, operative principle, influencing his life and actions, agreeably to that notion of saving faith which is required in a Christian. This I say, whether right or wrong, seems to follow from your own principles and concessions. But for further satisfaction it may not be amiss to inquire whether there be any thing parallel to this Christian faith in the minute philosophy. Suppose a fine gentleman or lady of fashion, who are too much employed to think for themselves, and are only freethinkers at secondhand, have the advantage of being betimes initiated in the principles of your sect, by conversing with men of depth and genius, who have often declared it to be their opinion

the world is governed either by fate or by chance, it matters not which; will you deny it possible for such persons to yield their assent to either of these propositions? *Alc.* I will not. *Euph.* And may not such their assent be properly called faith? *Alc.* It may. *Euph.* And yet it is possible those disciples of the minute philosophy may not dive so deep as to be able to frame any abstract, or precise, or any determinate idea whatsoever, either of fate or of chance. *Alc.* This too I grant. *Euph.* So that, according to you, this same gentleman or lady may be said to believe or have faith where they have not ideas. *Alc.* They may. *Euph.* And may not this faith or persuasion produce real effects, and show itself in the conduct and tenor of their lives, freeing them from the fears of superstition, and giving them a true relish of the world, with a noble indolence or indifference about what comes after. *Alc.* It may. *Euph.* And may not Christians, with equal reason, be allowed to believe the divinity of our Saviour, or that in him God and man make one person, and be verily persuaded thereof, so far as for such faith or belief to become a real principle of life and conduct, inasmuch as by virtue of such persuasion they submit to his government, believe his doctrine, and practise his precepts, although they frame no abstract idea of the union between the divine and human nature; nor may be able to clear up the notion of person to the contentment of a minute philosopher. To me it seems evident, that if none but those who had nicely examined, and could themselves explain, the principle of individuation in man, or untie the knots and answer the objections which may be raised even about human personal identity, would require of us to explain the divine mysteries, we should not be often called upon for a clear and distinct idea of person in relation to the Trinity, nor would the difficulties on that head be often objected to our faith. *Alc.* Methinks there is no such mystery in personal identity. *Euph.* Pray in what do you take it to consist? *Alc.* In consciousness. *Euph.* Whatever is possible may be supposed. *Alc.* It may. *Euph.* We will suppose now (which is possible in the nature of things, and reported to be fact) that a person, through some violent accident or distemper, should fall into such a total oblivion as to lose all consciousness of his past life and former ideas. I ask is he not still the same person? *Alc.* He is the same man, but not the same person. Indeed you ought not to suppose that a person loseth its former consciousness; for this is impossible, though a man perhaps may; but then he becomes another person. In the same person it must be owned some old ideas may be lost, and some new ones got; but a total change is inconsistent with identity of person. *Euph.* Let us then suppose that a person hath ideas, and is conscious during a certain space of time, which we will divide into three equal parts, whereof the later terms are marked by the letters A B C. In

the first part of time, the person gets a certain number of ideas, which are retained in A: during the second part of time he retains one-half of his old ideas, and loseth the other half, in place of which he acquires as many new ones: so that in B his ideas are half old and half new. And in the third part we suppose him to lose the remainder of the ideas acquired in the first, and to get new ones in their stead, which are retained in C, together with those acquired in the second part of time. Is this a possible fair supposition? *Alc.* It is. *Euph.* Upon these premises I am tempted to think, one may demonstrate that personal identity doth not consist in consciousness.* *Alc.* As how? *Euph.* You shall judge; but thus it seems to me. The persons in A and B are the same, being conscious of common ideas by supposition. The person in B is, for the same reason, one and the same with the person in C. Therefore the person in A is the same with the person in C, by that undoubted axiom, *Quæ conveniunt uni tertio conveniunt inter se.* But the person in C hath no idea in common with the person in A. Therefore personal identity doth not consist in consciousness. What do you think, Alciphron, is not this a plain inference? *Alc.* I tell you what I think: you will never assist my faith by puzzling my knowledge.

XII. There is, if I mistake not, a practical faith, or assent, which showeth itself in the will and actions of a man, although his understanding may not be furnished with those abstract, precise, distinct ideas, which, whatever a philosopher may pretend, are acknowledged to be above the talents of common men; among whom, nevertheless, may be found, even according to your own concession, many instances of such practical faith, in other matters which do not concern religion. What should hinder therefore, but that doctrines relating to heavenly mysteries, might be taught in this saving sense to vulgar minds, which you may well think incapable of all teaching and faith in the sense you suppose. Which mistaken sense, said Crito, has given occasion to much profane and misapplied raillery. But all this may very justly be retorted on the minute philosophers themselves, who confound scholasticism with Christianity, and impute to other men those perplexities, chimeras, and inconsistent ideas, which are often the workmanship of their own brains, and proceed from their own wrong way of thinking. Who doth not see that such an ideal, abstracted faith is never thought of by the bulk of Christians, husbandmen, for instance, artisans, or servants? Or what footsteps are there in the holy scripture to make us think, that the wiredrawing of abstract ideas was a task enjoined either Jews or Christians? Is there any thing in the law or the prophets, the evangelists or apostles, that looks like it? Every one whose understanding is not perverted by science

* Vide Reid on the Intellectual Powers, Essay III. chap. iv. and vi. 8vo. edit., London, 1843.

falsely so called, may see, the saving faith of Christians is quite of another kind, a vital, operative principle, productive of charity and obedience. *Alc.* What are we to think then of the disputes and decisions of the famous council of Nice, and so many subsequent councils? What was the intention of those venerable fathers the Homoousians and the Homoiousians? Why did they disturb themselves and the world with hard words and subtle controversies? *Cri.* Whatever their intention was, it could not be to beget nice abstracted ideas of mysteries in the minds of common Christians, this being evidently impossible: nor doth it appear that the bulk of Christian men did in those days think it any part of their duty, to lay aside the words, shut their eyes, and frame those abstract ideas; any more than men now do of force, time, number, or several other things, about which they nevertheless believe, know, argue, and dispute. To me it seems, that, whatever was the source of these controversies, and howsoever they were managed, wherein human infirmity must be supposed to have had its share, the main end was not, on either side, to convey precise positive ideas to the minds of men, by the use of those contested terms, but rather a negative sense, tending to exclude Polytheism on the one hand, and Sabellianism on the other.* *Alc.* But what shall we say of so many learned and ingenious divines, who from time to time have obliged the world with new explications of mysteries, who, having themselves professedly laboured to acquire accurate ideas, would recommend their discoveries and speculations to others for articles of faith? *Cri.* To all such innovators in religion I would say with Jerome, "Why after so many centuries do you pretend to teach us what was untaught before? Why explain what neither Peter nor Paul thought necessary to be explained?"† And it must be owned, that the explication of mysteries in divinity, allowing the attempt as fruitless as the pursuit of the philosopher's stone in chemistry, or the perpetual motion in mechanics, is no more than they, chargeable on the profession itself, but only on the wrong-headed professors of it.

XIII. It seems, that what hath been now said may be applied to other mysteries of our religion. Original sin, for instance, a man may find it impossible to form an idea of in abstract, or of the manner of its transmission, and yet the belief thereof may produce in his mind a salutary sense of his own unworthiness, and the goodness of his Redeemer: from whence may follow good habits, and from them good actions, the genuine effects of faith, which, considered in its true light, is a thing neither repugnant nor incomprehensible, as some men would persuade us, but suited even to vulgar capacities, placed in the will and affections rather than in the understanding, and producing holy lives,

* Sozomen. lib. ii. c. 8.

† Hieronym. ad Pammachium et Oceanum de Erroribus Origenis.

rather than subtile theories. Faith, I say, is not an indolent perception, but an operative persuasion of mind, which ever worketh some suitable action, disposition, or emotion in those who have it; as it were easy to prove and illustrate by innumerable instances, taken from human affairs. And, indeed, while the Christian religion is considered as an institution fitted to ordinary minds, rather than to the nicer talents, whether improved or puzzled, of speculative men; and our notions about faith are accordingly taken from the commerce of the world, and practice of mankind, rather than from the peculiar systems of refiners; it will, I think, be no difficult matter to conceive and justify the meaning and use of our belief of mysteries, against the most confident assertions and objections of the minute philosophers, who are easily to be caught in those very snares, which they have spun and spread for others. And that humour of controversy, the mother and nurse of heresies, would doubtless very much abate, if it was considered that things are to be rated, not by the colour, shape, or stamp, so truly as by the weight. If the moment of opinions had been by some litigious divines made the measure of their zeal, it might have spared much trouble both to themselves and others. Certainly one that takes his notions of faith, opinion, and assent from common sense, and common use, and has maturely weighed the nature of signs and language, will not be so apt to controvert the wording of a mystery, or to break the peace of the church, for the sake of retaining or rejecting a term.

XIV. *Alc.* It seems, Euphranor, and you would persuade me into an opinion, that there is nothing so singularly absurd as we are apt to think, in the belief of mysteries; and that a man need not renounce his reason to maintain his religion. But if this were true, how comes it to pass, that, in proportion as men abound in knowledge, they dwindle in faith? *Euph.* O Alciphron, I have learned from you, that there is nothing like going to the bottom of things, and analyzing them into their first principles. I shall therefore make an essay of this method, for clearing up the nature of faith: with what success, I shall leave you to determine; for I dare not pronounce myself on my own judgment, whether it be right or wrong: but thus it seems to me. The objections made to faith are by no means an effect of knowledge, but proceed rather from an ignorance of what knowledge is; which ignorance may possibly be found even in those who pass for masters of this or that particular branch of knowledge. Science and faith agree in this, that they both imply an assent of the mind: and, as the nature of the first is most clear and evident, it should be first considered in order to cast a light on the other. To trace things from their original, it seems that the human mind, naturally furnished with the ideas of things particular

and concrete, and being designed, not for the bare intuition of ideas, but for action or operation about them, and pursuing her own happiness therein, stands in need of certain general rules or theorems to direct her operations in this pursuit; the supplying which want is the true, original, reasonable end of studying the arts and sciences. Now these rules being general, it follows, that they are not to be obtained by the mere consideration of the original ideas, or particular things, but by the means of marks or signs, which, being so far forth universal, become the immediate instruments and materials of science. It is not therefore by mere contemplation of particular things, and much less of their abstract general ideas, that the mind makes her progress, but by an apposite choice and skilful management of signs: for instance, force and number, taken in concrete with their adjuncts, subjects, and signs, are what every one knows; and considered in abstract, so as making precise ideas of themselves, they are what nobody can comprehend. That their abstract nature, therefore, is not the foundation of science, is plain: and that barely considering their ideas in concrete, is not the method to advance in the respective sciences, is what every one that reflects may see; nothing being more evident, than that one who can neither write nor read, in common use understands the meaning of numeral words, as well as the best philosopher or mathematician.

XV. But here lies the difference: the one, who understands the notation of numbers, by means thereof is able to express briefly and distinctly all the variety and degrees of number, and to perform with ease and despatch several arithmetical operations, by the help of general rules. Of all which operations as the use in human life is very evident, so it is no less evident, that the performing them depends on the aptness of the notation. If we suppose rude mankind without the use of language, it may be presumed, they would be ignorant of arithmetic: but the use of names, by the repetition whereof in a certain order they might express endless degrees of number, would be the first step towards that science. The next step would be, to devise proper marks of a permanent nature, and visible to the eye, the kind and order whereof must be chose with judgment, and accommodated to the names. Which marking, or notation, would, in proportion as it was apt and regular, facilitate the invention and application of general rules, to assist the mind in reasoning, and judging, in extending, recording, and communicating its knowledge about numbers: in which theory and operations, the mind is immediately occupied about the signs or notes, by mediation of which it is directed to act about things, or number in concrete (as the logicians call it), without ever considering the simple, abstract, intellectual, general idea of nnmber. I imagine one need not think much to be convinced that the science of arithmetic, in its rise, operations,

rules, and theorems, is altogether conversant about the artificial use of signs, names, and characters. These names and characters are universal, inasmuch as they are signs. The names are referred to things, and the characters to names, and both to operation. The names being few, and proceeding by a certain analogy, the characters will be more useful, the simpler they are, and the more aptly they express this analogy. Hence the old notation by letters was more useful than words written at length: and the modern notation by figures, expressing the progression or analogy of the names by their simple places, is much preferable to that for ease and expedition, as the invention of algebraical symbols is to this for extensive and general use. As arithmetic and algebra are sciences of great clearness, certainty, and extent, which are immediately conversant about signs, upon the skilful use and management whereof they entirely depend, so a little attention to them may possibly help us to judge of the progress of the mind in other sciences, which, though differing in nature, design, and object, may yet agree in the general methods of proof and inquiry.

XVI. If I mistake not, all sciences, so far as they are universal and demonstrable by human reason, will be found conversant about signs as their immediate object, though these in the application are referred to things: the reason whereof is not difficult to comprehend. For as the mind is better acquainted with some sort of objects, which are earlier suggested to it, strike it more sensibly, or are more easily comprehended than others, it is naturally led to substitute those objects for such as are more subtile, fleeting, or difficult to conceive. Nothing, I say, is more natural, than to make the things we know, a step towards those we do not know; and to explain and represent things less familiar by others which are more so. Now, it is certain we imagine before we reflect, and we perceive by sense before we imagine, and of all our senses the sight is the most clear, distinct, various, agreeable, and comprehensive. Hence it is natural to assist the intellect by the imagination, the imagination by sense, and the other senses by sight. Hence, figures, metaphors, and types. We illustrate spiritual things by corporeal; we substitute sounds for thoughts, and written letters for sounds; emblems, symbols, and hieroglyphics for things too obscure to strike, and too various or too fleeting to be retained. We substitute things imaginable, for things intelligible, sensible things for imaginable, smaller things for those that are too great to be comprehended easily, and greater things for such as are too small to be discerned distinctly, present things for absent, permanent for perishing, and visible for invisible. Hence the use of models and diagrams. Hence right lines are substituted for time, velocity, and other things of very different natures. Hence we speak of spirits in a figurative

style, expressing the operations of the mind by allusions and terms borrowed from sensible things, such as apprehend, conceive, reflect, discourse, and such like: and hence those allegories which illustrate things intellectual by visions exhibited to the fancy. Plato, for instance, represents the mind presiding in her vehicle by the driver of a winged chariot, which sometimes moults and droops: this chariot is drawn by two horses, the one good and of a good race, the other of a contrary kind, symbolically expressing the tendency of the mind towards the divinity, as she soars or is borne aloft by two instincts like wings, the one in the intellect towards truth, the other in the will towards excellence, which instincts moult or are weakened by sensual inclinations, expressing also her alternate elevations and depressions, the struggles between reason and appetite, like horses that go an unequal pace, or draw different ways, embarrassing the soul in her progress to perfection. I am inclined to think the doctrine of signs a point of great importance and general extent, which, if duly considered, would cast no small light upon things, and afford a just and genuine solution of many difficulties.

XVII. Thus much, upon the whole, may be said of all signs: that they do not always suggest ideas signified to the mind: that when they suggest ideas, they are not general abstract ideas: that they have other uses besides barely standing for and exhibiting ideas, such as raising proper emotions, producing certain dispositions or habits of mind, and directing our actions in pursuit of that happiness, which is the ultimate end and design, the primary spring and motive, that sets rational agents at work: that the true end of speech, reason, science, faith, assent in all its different degrees, is not merely, or principally, or always the imparting or acquiring of ideas, but rather something of an active, operative nature, tending to a conceived good, which may sometimes be obtained, not only although the ideas marked are not offered to the mind, but even although there should be no possibility of offering or exhibiting any such idea to the mind: for instance, the algebraic mark, which denotes the root of a negative square, hath its use in logistic operations, although it be impossible to form an idea of any such quantity. And what is true of algebraic signs, is also true of words or language, modern algebra being, in fact, a more short, apposite, and artificial sort of language, and it being possible to express by words at length, though less conveniently, all the steps of an algebraical process. And it must be confessed, that even the mathematical sciences themselves, which, above all others, are reckoned the most clear and certain, if they are considered, not as instruments to direct our practice, but as speculations to employ our curiosity, will be found to fall short, in many instances, of those clear and distinct ideas, which, it seems, the minute philosophers

of this age, whether knowingly or ignorantly, expect and insist upon in the mysteries of religion.

XVIII. Be the science or subject what it will, whensoever men quit particulars for generalities, things concrete for abstractions, when they forsake practical views, and the useful purposes of knowledge, for barren speculation, considering means and instruments as ultimate ends, and labouring to attain precise ideas, which they suppose indiscriminately annexed to all terms, they will be sure to embarrass themselves with difficulties and disputes. Such are those which have sprung up in geometry about the nature of the angle of contact, the doctrine of proportions, of indivisibles, infinitesimals, and divers other points; notwithstanding all which, that science is very rightly esteemed an excellent and useful one, and is really found to be so in many occasions of human life, wherein it governs and directs the actions of men, so that by the aid or influence thereof, those operations become just and accurate, which would otherwise be faulty and uncertain. And from a parity of reason, we should not conclude any other doctrines which govern, influence, or direct the mind of man to be, any more than that, the less true or excellent, because they afford matter of controversy and useless speculation to curious and licentious wits: particularly those articles of our Christian faith, which, in proportion as they are believed, persuade, and, as they persuade, influence the lives and actions of men. As to the perplexity of contradictions and abstracted notions, in all parts, whether of human science or divine faith, cavillers may equally object, and unwary persons incur, while the judicious avoid it. There is no need to depart from the received rules of reasoning to justify the belief of Christians. And if any pious men think otherwise, it may be supposed an effect, not of religion, or of reason, but only of human weakness. If this age be singularly productive of infidels, I shall not therefore conclude it to be more knowing, but only more presuming, than former ages: and their conceit, I doubt, is not the effect of consideration. To me it seems, that the more thoroughly and extensively any man shall consider and scan the principles, objects, and methods of proceeding in arts and sciences, the more he will be convinced, there is no weight in those plausible objections that are made against the mysteries of faith, which it will be no difficult matter for him to maintain or justify in the received method of arguing, on the common principles of logic, and by numberless avowed parallel cases, throughout the several branches of human knowledge, in all which the supposition of abstract ideas creates the same difficulties.

XIX. *Alc.* I will allow, Euphranor, this reasoning of yours to have all the force you meant it should have. I freely own

there may be mysteries: that we may believe where we do not understand: and that faith may be of use although its object is not distinctly apprehended. In a word, I grant there may be faith and mysteries in other things, but not in religion: and that for this plain reason, because it is absurd to suppose, there should be any such thing as religion; and if there be no religion, it follows there cannot be religious faith or mysteries. Religion, it is evident, implies the worship of a God; which worship supposeth rewards and punishments; which suppose merits and demerits, actions good and evil, and these suppose human liberty, a thing impossible; and, consequently, religion, a thing built thereon must be an unreasonable, absurd thing. There can be no rational hopes or fears where there is no guilt, nor any guilt where there is nothing done but what unavoidably follows from the structure of the world and the laws of motion. Corporeal objects strike on the organs of sense, whence ensues a vibration in the nerves, which being communicated to the soul or animal spirit, in the brain or root of the nerves, produceth therein that motion called volition: and this produceth a new determination in the spirits, causing them to flow into such nerves as must necessarily, by the laws of mechanism, produce such certain actions. This being the case, it follows that those things which vulgarly pass for human actions are to be esteemed mechanical, and that they are falsely ascribed to a free principle. There is, therefore, no foundation for praise or blame, fear or hope, reward or punishment, nor consequently for religion; which, as I observed before, is built upon and supposeth those things. *Euph.* You imagine, Alciphron, if I rightly understand you, that man is a sort of organ, played on by outward objects, which, according to the different shape and texture of the nerves, produce different motions and effects therein. *Alc.* Man may, indeed, be fitly compared to an organ; but a puppet is the very thing. You must know, that certain particles issuing forth in right lines from all sensible objects compose so many rays, or filaments, which drive, draw, and actuate every part of the soul and body of man, just as threads or wires do the joints of that little wooden machine, vulgarly called a *puppet:* with this only difference, that the latter are gross and visible to common eyes, whereas the former are too fine and subtile to be discerned by any but a sagacious free-thinker. This admirably accounts for all those operations, which we have been taught to ascribe to a thinking principle within us. *Euph.* This is an ingenious thought, and must be of great use in freeing men from all anxiety about moral notions, as it transfers the principle of action from the human soul to things outward and foreign. But I have my scruples about it. For you suppose the mind, in a literal sense, to be moved, and its volitions to be mere motions.

Now if another should affirm, as it is not impossible some other may, that the soul is incorporeal, and that motion is one thing and volition another, I would fain know how you could make your point clear to such a one. It must be owned very clear to those who admit the soul to be corporeal, and all her acts to be but so many motions. Upon this supposition, indeed, the light wherein you place human nature is no less true, than it is fine and new. But let any one deny this supposition, which is easily done, and the whole superstructure falls to the ground. If we grant the abovementioned points, I will not deny a fatal necessity must ensue. But I see no reason for granting them. On the contrary it seems plain, that motion and thought are two things as really and as manifestly distinct as a triangle and a sound. It seems, therefore, that in order to prove the necessity of human actions, you suppose what wants proof as much as the very point to be proved.

XX. *Alc.* But supposing the mind incorporeal, I shall nevertheless, be able to prove my point. Not to amuse you with far fetched arguments, I shall only desire you to look into your own breast and observe how things pass there, when an object offers itself to the mind. First, the understanding considers it: in the next place the judgment decrees about it, as a thing to be chosen or rejected, to be omitted or done, in this or that manner: and this decree of the judgment doth necessarily determine the will, whose office is merely to execute what is ordained by another faculty: consequently there is no such thing as freedom of the will: for that which is necessary cannot be free. In freedom there should be an indifference to either side of the question, a power to act or not to act, without prescription or control: and without this indifference and this power it is evident the will cannot be free. But it is no less evident, that the will is not indifferent in its actions, being absolutely determined and governed by the judgment. Now whatever moves the judgment, whether the greatest present uneasiness, or the greatest apparent good, or whatever else it be, it is all one to the point in hand. The will being ever concluded and controlled by the judgment is in all cases alike under necessity. There is, indeed, throughout the whole human nature, nothing like a principle of freedom, every faculty being determined in all its acts by something foreign to it. The understanding, for instance, cannot alter its idea, but must necessarily see it such as it presents itself. The appetites by a natural necessity are carried towards their respective objects. Reason cannot infer indifferently any thing from any thing, but is limited by the nature and connexion of things, and the eternal rules of reasoning. And as this is confessedly the case of all other faculties, so it equally holds with respect to the will itself, as hath been already shown. And if we may credit the divine

characterizer of our times, this above all others must be allowed the most slavish faculty. "Appetite," saith that noble writer, "which is elder brother to reason, being the lad of stronger growth, is sure on every contest to take the advantage of drawing all to his own side: and will, so highly boasted, is but at best a foot-ball or top between those youngsters who prove very unfortunately matched, till the youngest, instead of now and then a kick or lash bestowed to little purpose, forsakes the ball or top itself, and begins to lay about his elder brother." *Cri.* This beautiful parable for style and manner might equal those of a known English writer, in low life renowned for allegory, were it not a little incorrect, making the weaker lad find his account in laying about the stronger. *Alc.* This is helped by supposing the stronger lad the greater coward: but, be that as it will, so far as it relates to the point in hand, this is a clear state of the case. The same point may be also proved from the prescience of God. That which is certainly foreknown will certainly be. And what is certain is necessary. And necessary actions cannot be the effect of free-will. Thus you have this fundamental point of our free-thinking philosophy demonstrated different ways. *Euph.* Tell me, Alciphron, do you think it implies a contradiction, that God should make a man free? *Alc.* I do not. *Euph.* It is then possible there may be such a thing. *Alc.* This I do not deny. *Euph.* You can therefore conceive and suppose such a free agent. *Alc.* Admitting that I can; what then? *Euph.* Would not such a one think that he acted? *Alc.* He would. *Euph.* And condemn himself for some actions, and approve himself for others? *Alc.* This too I grant. *Euph.* Would he not think he deserved reward or punishment? *Alc.* He would. *Euph.* And are not all these characters actually found in man? *Alc.* They are. *Euph.* Tell me now, what other character of your supposed free agent may not actually be found in man? for if there is none such, we must conclude that man hath all the marks of a free agent. *Alc.* Let me see! I was certainly overseen in granting it possible, even for almighty power, to make such a thing as a free human agent. I wonder how I came to make such an absurd concession, after what had been, as I observed before, demonstrated so many different ways. *Euph.* O Alciphron, it is vulgarly observed that men judge of others by themselves. But in judging of me by this rule, you may be mistaken. Many things are plain to one of your sagacity, which are not so to me, who am often bewildered rather than enlightened by those very proofs, that with you pass for clear and evident. And, indeed, be the inference never so just, yet so long as the premises are not clear, I cannot be thoroughly convinced. You must give me leave therefore to propose some questions, the solution of which may show what at present I am not able to discern. *Alc.* I shall

leave what hath been said with you, to consider and ruminate upon. It is now time to set out on our journey; there is, therefore, no room for a long string of question and answer.

XXI. *Euph.* I shall then only beg leave in a summary manner, to make a remark or two on what you have advanced. In the first place I observe, you take that for granted which I cannot grant, when you assert whatever is certain the same to be necessary. To me, certain and necessary seem very different; there being nothing in the former notion that implies constraint, nor consequently which may not consist with a man's being accountable for his actions. If it is foreseen that such an action shall be done: may it not also be foreseen that it shall be an effect of human choice and liberty? In the next place I observe, that you very nicely abstract and distinguish the actions of the mind, judgment, and will: that you make use of such terms as power, faculty, act, determination, indifference, freedom, necessity, and the like, as if they stood for distinct abstract ideas: and that this supposition seems to ensnare the mind into the same perplexities and errors, which, in all other instances, are observed to attend the doctrine of abstraction. It is self-evident, that there is such a thing as motion; and yet there have been found philosophers, who, by refined reasoning, would undertake to prove that there was no such thing. Walking before them was thought the proper way to confute those ingenious men. It is no less evident, that man is a free agent: and though by abstracted reasonings you should puzzle me, and seem to prove the contrary, yet so long as I am conscious of my own actions, this inward evidence of plain fact will bear me up against all your reasonings, however subtile and refined. The confuting plain points by obscure ones, may perhaps convince me of the ability of your philosophers, but never of their tenets. I cannot conceive why the acute Cratylus should suppose a power of acting in the appetite and reason, and none at all in the will? Allowing, I say, the distinction of three such beings in the mind, I do not see how this could be true. But if I cannot abstract and distinguish so many beings in the soul of man so accurately as you do, I do not find it necessary, since it is evident to me in the gross and concrete that I am a free agent. Nor will it avail to say, the will is governed by the judgment, or determined by the object, while, in every sudden common case, I cannot discern nor abstract the decree of the judgment from the command of the will: while I know the sensible object to be absolutely inert: and lastly, while I am conscious that I am an active being, who can and do determine myself. If I should suppose things spiritual to be corporeal, or refine things actual and real into general abstracted notions, or by metaphysical skill split things simple and individual into manifold parts, I do not know what may follow: but

if I take things as they are, and ask any plain untutored man, whether he acts or is free in this or that particular action, he readily assents, and I as readily believe him from what I find within. And thus, by an induction of particulars, I may conclude man to be a free agent, although I may be puzzled to define or conceive a notion of freedom in general and abstract. And if man be free he is plainly accountable. But if you shall define, abstract, suppose, and it shall follow that according to your definitions, abstractions, and suppositions, there can be no freedom in man, and you shall thence infer that he is not accountable, I shall make bold to depart from your metaphysical abstracted sense, and appeal to the common sense of mankind.

XXII. If we consider the notions that obtain in the world of guilt and merit, praise and blame, accountable and unaccountable, we shall find the common question in order to applaud or censure, acquit or condemn a man, is, whether he did such an action? and whether he was himself when he did it? which comes to the same thing. It should seem therefore that in the ordinary commerce of mankind, any person is esteemed accountable simply as he is an agent. And though you should tell me that man is inactive, and that the sensible objects act upon him, yet my own experience assures me of the contrary. I know I act, and what I act I am accountable for. And if this be true, the foundation of religion and morality remains unshaken. Religion, I say, is concerned no further than that man should be accountable: and this he is according to my sense, and the common sense of the world, if he acts; and that he doth act is self-evident. The grounds, therefore, and ends of religion are secured; whether your philosophic notion of liberty agrees with man's actions or no, and whether his actions are certain or contingent, the question being not whether he did it with a free will, or what determined his will? not, whether it was certain or foreknown that he would do it? but only whether he did it wilfully? as what must entitle him to the guilt or merit of it. *Alc.* But still, the question recurs, whether man be free? *Euph.* To determine this question, ought we not first to determine what is meant by the word free? *Alc.* We ought. *Euph.* In my opinion, a man is said to be free, so far forth as he can do what he will. Is this so, or is it not? *Alc.* It seems so. *Euph.* Man therefore acting according to his will, is to be accounted free. *Alc.* This I admit to be true in the vulgar sense. But a philosopher goes higher, and inquires whether man be free to will? *Euph.* That is, whether he can will as he wills? I know not how philosophical it may be to ask this question, but it seems very unintelligible. The notions of guilt and merit, justice and reward, are in the minds of men, antecedent to all metaphysical disquisitions: and according to

those received natural notions, it is not doubted that man is accountable, that he acts, and is self determined.

XXIII. But a minute philosopher shall, in virtue of wrong suppositions, confound things most evidently distinct; body, for instance, with spirit, motion with volition, certainty with necessity; and an abstracter or refiner shall so analyze the most simple instantaneous act of the mind, as to distinguish therein divers faculties and tendencies, principles and operations, causes and effects; and having abstracted, supposed, and reasoned upon principles, gratuitous and obscure, such a one he will conclude it is no act all, and man no agent but a puppet, or an organ played on by outward objects, and his will a top or a foot-ball. And this passeth for philosophy and free-thinking. Perhaps this may be what it passeth for, but it by no means seems a natural or just way of thinking. To me it seems, that if we begin from things particular and concrete, and thence proceed to general notions and conclusions, there will be no difficulty in this matter. But if we begin with generalities, and lay our foundation in abstract ideas, we shall find ourselves entangled and lost in a labyrinth of our own making. I need not observe, what every one must see, the ridicule of proving man no agent, and yet pleading for free thought and action, of setting up at once for advocates of liberty and necessity. I have hastily thrown together these hints or remarks, on what you call a fundamental article of the minute philosophy, and your method of proving it, which seems to furnish an admirable specimen of the sophistry of abstract ideas. If in this summary way I have been more dogmatical than became me, you must excuse what you occasioned, by declining a joint and leisurely examination of the truth. *Alc.* I think we have examined matters sufficiently. *Cri.* To all you have said against human liberty, it is a sufficient answer to observe, that your arguments proceed upon an erroneous supposition, either of the soul's being corporeal, or of abstract ideas. And on the other hand, there is not need of much inquiry to be convinced of two points, than which none are more evident, more obvious, and more universally admitted by men of all sorts, learned or unlearned, in all times and places, to wit, that man acts and is accountable for his actions. Whatever abstracters, refiners, or men prejudiced to a false hypothesis may pretend, it is, if I mistake not, evident to every thinking man of common sense, that human minds are so far from being engines or foot-balls, acted upon and bandied about by corporeal objects, without any inward principle of freedom, or action, that the only original true notions that we have of freedom, agent, or action, are obtained by reflecting on ourselves, and the operations of our own minds. The singularity and credulity of minute philosophers, who suffer themselves to be abused by the paralogisms of three or four eminent patriarchs of infidelity in the last age, is, I think, not to

be matched; there being no instance of bigotted superstition, the ringleaders whereof have been able to seduce their followers more openly and more widely from the plain dictates of nature and common sense.

XXIV. *Alc.* It has been always an objection against the discoveries of truth, that they depart from received opinions. The character of singularity is a tax on free-thinking: and as such we most willingly bear it, and glory in it. A genuine philosopher is never modest in a false sense, to the preferring authority before reason, or an old and common opinion before a true one. Which false modesty, as it discourages men from treading in untrodden paths, or striking out new light, is above all other qualities the greatest enemy to free-thinking. *Cri.* Authority in disputable points will have its weight with a judicious mind, which yet will follow evidence wherever it leads. Without preferring we may allow it a good second to reason. Your gentlemen, therefore, of the minute philosophy, may spare a world of common place upon reason, and light, and discoveries. We are not attached to authority against reason, nor afraid of untrodden paths that lead to truth, and are ready to follow a new light when we are sure it is no *ignis fatuus.* Reason may oblige a man to believe against his inclinations; but why should a man quit salutary notions for others not less unreasonable than pernicious? Your schemes and principles, and boasted demonstrations have been at large proposed and examined. You have shifted your notions, successively retreated from one scheme to another, and in the end renounced them all. Your objections have been treated in the same manner, and with the same event. If we except all that relates to the particular errors and faults of private persons, and difficulties which, from the nature of things, we are not obliged to explain, it is surprising to see, after such magnificent threats, how little remains, that can amount to a pertinent objection against the Christian religion. What you have produced has been tried by the fair test of reason; and though you should hope to prevail by ridicule when you cannot by reason, yet in the upshot, I apprehend you will find it impractible to destroy all sense of religion. Make your countrymen ever so vicious, ignorant, and profane, men will still be disposed to look up to a supreme being. Religion, right or wrong, will subsist in some shape or other, and some worship there will surely be either of God or the creature. As for your ridicule, can anything be more ridiculous, than to see the most unmeaning men of the age set up for free-thinkers, men so strong in assertion, and yet so weak in argument, advocates for freedom introducing a fatality, patriots trampling on the laws of their country, and pretenders to virtue, destroying the motives of it? Let any impartial man but cast an eye on the opinions of the minute philosophers, and

then say if anything can be more ridiculous, than to believe such things, and at the same time laugh at credulity.

XXV. *Lys.* Say what you will we have the laughers on our side: and as for your reasoning I take it to be another name for sophistry. *Cri.* And I suppose by the same rule you take your own sophisms for arguments. To speak plainly, I know no sort of sophism that is not employed by minute philosophers against religion. They are guilty of a *petitio principii*, in taking for granted that we believe contradictions; of *non causa pro causa*, in affirming that uncharitable feuds and discords are the effects of Christianity; of *ignoratio elenchi*, in expecting demonstration where we pretend only to faith. If I was not afraid to offend the delicacy of polite ears, nothing were easier than to assign instances of every kind of sophism, which would show how skilful your own philosophers are in the practice of that sophistry you impute to others. *Euph.* For my own part, if sophistry be the art or faculty of deceiving other men, I must acquit these gentlemen of it. They seem to have led me a progress through atheism, libertinism, enthusiasm, fatalism, not to convince me of the truth of any of them, so much as to confirm me in my own way of thinking. They have exposed their fairy ware not to cheat but divert us. As I know them to be professed masters of ridicule, so in a serious sense I know not what to make of them. *Alc.* You do not know what to make of us! I should be sorry you did. He must be a superficial philosopher that is soon fathomed.

XXVI. *Cri.* The ambiguous character is, it seems, the sure way to fame and esteem in the learned world, as it stands constituted at present. When the ingenious reader is at a loss to determine whether his author be atheist or deist or polytheist, stoic or epicurean, sceptic or dogmatist, infidel or enthusiast, in jest or in earnest, he concludes him without hesitation to be enigmatical and profound. In fact, it is true of the most admired writers of the age, that no man alive can tell what to make of them, or what they would be at. *Alc.* We have among us moles that dig deep under ground, and eagles that soar out of sight. We can act all parts and become all opinions, putting them on or off with great freedom of wit and humour. *Euph.* It seems then you are a pair of inscrutable, unfathomable, fashionable philosophers. *Lys.* It cannot be denied. *Euph.* But, I remember, you set out with an open dogmatical air, and talked of plain principles and evident reasoning, promised to make things as clear as noon-day, to extirpate wrong notions and plant right in their stead. Soon after, you began to recede from your first notions and adopt others: you advanced one while and retreated another, yielded and retracted, said and unsaid: and after having followed you through so many untrodden paths and intricate

mazes I find myself never the nearer. *Alc.* Did we not tell you the gentlemen of our sect are great proficients in raillery? *Euph.* But, methinks, it is a vain attempt for a plain man of any settled belief or principles to engage with such slippery, fugitive, changeable philosophers. It seems as if a man should stand still in the same place, while his adversary chooses and changes his situation, has full range and liberty to traverse the field, and attack him on all sides and in all shapes, from a nearer or further distance, on horseback or on foot, in light or heavy armour, in close fight or with missive weapons. *Alc.* It must be owned a gentleman hath great advantage over a strait-laced pedant or bigot. *Euph.* But after all, what am I the better for the conversation of two such knowing gentlemen; I hoped to have unlearned my errors, and to have learned truths from you, but, to my great disappointment, I do not find that I am either untaught or taught. *Alc.* To unteach men their prejudices is a difficult task: and this must first be done, before we can pretend to teach them the truth. Besides, we have at present no time to prove and argue. *Euph.* But suppose my mind white paper, and without being at any pains to extirpate my opinions, or prove your own, only say what you would write thereon, or what you would teach me in case I were teachable. Be for once in earnest, and let me know some one conclusion of yours before we part; or I shall entreat Crito to violate the laws of hospitality towards those who have violated the laws of philosophy, by hanging out false lights to one benighted in ignorance and error. I appeal to you (said he, turning to Crito) whether these philosophical knight-errants should not be confined in this castle of yours, till they make reparation. Euphranor has reason, said Crito, and my sentence is that you remain here in durance, till you have done something towards satisfying the engagement I am under, having promised, he should know your opinions from yourselves, which you also agreed to.

XXVII. *Alc.* Since it must be so I will now reveal what I take to be the sum and substance, the grand arcanum and ultimate conclusion of our sect, and that in two words, ΠΑΝΤΑ ΥΠΟΛΗΨΙΣ. *Cri.* You are then a downright sceptic. But, sceptic as you are, you own it, probable there is a God, certain that the Christian religion is useful, possible it may be true, certain that if it be the minute philosophers are in a bad way. This being the case, how can it be questioned what course a wise man should take? Whether the principles of Christians or infidels are truest may be made a question, but which are safest can be none. Certainly if you doubt of all opinions you must doubt of your own; and then, for aught you know, the Christian may be true. The more doubt the more room there is for faith, a sceptic of all men having the least right to demand evidence.

But, whatever uncertainty there may be in other points, thus much is certain: either there is or is not a God: there is or is not a revelation: man either is or is not an agent: the soul is or is not immortal. If the negatives are not sure the affirmatives are possible. If the negatives are improbable, the affirmatives are probable. In proportion as any of your ingenious men finds himself unable to prove any one of these negatives, he hath grounds to suspect he may be mistaken. A minute philosopher, therefore, that would act a consistent part, should have the diffidence, the modesty, and the timidity, as well as the doubts, of a sceptic; not pretend to an ocean of light, and then lead us to an abyss of darkness. If I have any notion of ridicule, this is most ridiculous. But your ridiculing what, for aught you know, may be true, I can make no sense of. It is neither acting as a wise man with regard to your own interest, nor as a good man with regard to that of your country.

XXVIII. Tully saith somewhere, *aut undique religionem tolle aut usquequaque conserva:* either let us have no religion at all, or let it be respected. If any single instance can be shown of a people that ever prospered without some religion, or if there be any religion better than the Christian, propose it in the grand assembly of the nation to change our constitution, and either live without religion, or introduce that new religion. A sceptic, as well as other men, is member of a community, and can distinguish between good and evil, natural or political. Be this, then, his guide as a patriot, though he be no Christian. Or, if he doth not pretend even to this discernment, let him not pretend to correct or alter what he knows nothing of: neither let him that only doubts behave as if he could demonstrate. Timagoras is wont to say, I find my country in possession of certain tenets: they appear to have an useful tendency, and, as such, are encouraged by the legislature; they make a main part of our constitution: I do not find these innovators can disprove them, or substitute things more useful and certain in their stead: out of regard, therefore, to the good of mankind, and the laws of my country, I shall acquiesce in them. I do not say Timagoras is a Christian, but I reckon him a patriot. Not to inquire in a point of so great concern is folly, but it is still a higher degree of folly to condemn without inquiring. Lysicles seemed heartily tired of this conversation. It is now late, said he to Alciphron, and all things are ready for our departure. Every one hath his own way of thinking; and it is as impossible for me to adopt another man's, as to make his complexion and features mine. Alciphron pleaded that, having complied with Euphranor's conditions, they were now at liberty: and Euphranor answered that, all he desired having been to know their tenets, he had nothing further to pretend.

XXIX. The philosophers being gone, I observed to Crito, how unaccountable it was, that men so easy to confute should yet be so difficult to convince. This, said Crito, is accounted for by Aristotle, who tells us that arguments have not an effect on all men, but only on them whose minds are prepared by education and custom, as land is for seed.* Make a point never so clear, it is great odds, that a man, whose habits and the bent of whose mind lie a contrary way, shall be unable to comprehend it. So weak a thing is reason in competition with inclination. I replied, this answer might hold with respect to other persons and other times: but when the question was of inquisitive men, in an age wherein reason was so much cultivated, and thinking so much in vogue, it did not seem satisfactory. I have known it remarked, said Crito, by a man of much observation, that in the present age thinking is more talked of but less practised than in ancient times; and that since the revival of learning men have read much and wrote much, but thought little: insomuch that with us to think closely and justly is the least part of a learned man, and none at all of a polite man. The free thinkers, it must be owned, make great pretensions to thinking, and yet they show but little exactness in it. A lively man, said he, and what the world calls a man of sense, are often destitute of this talent, which is not a mere gift of nature, but must be improved and perfected, by much attention and exercise on very different subjects, a thing of more pains and time than the hasty men of parts in our age care to take. Such were the sentiments of a judicious friend of mine; and, if you are not already sufficiently convinced of these truths, you need only cast an eye on the dark and confused, but nevertheless admired, writers of this famous sect: and then you will be able to judge, whether those who are led by men of such wrong heads can have very good ones of their own. Such, for instance, was Spinosa the great leader of our modern infidels, in whom are to be found many schemes and notions much admired and followed of late years; such as undermining religion, under the pretence of vindicating and explaining it: the maintaining it not necessary to believe in Christ according to the flesh: the persuading men that miracles are to be understood only in a spiritual and allegorical sense: that vice is not so bad a thing as we are apt to think: that men are mere machines impelled by fatal necessity. I have heard, said I, Spinosa represented as a man of close argument and demonstration. He did, replied Crito, demonstrate; but it was after such a manner, as any one may demonstrate any thing. Allow a man the privilege to make his own definitions of common words, and it will be no hard matter for him to infer conclusions, which in one sense shall be true and in

* Ethic. ad Nicom. l. x. c. 9.

another false, at once seeming paradoxes and manifest truisms. For example, let but Spinosa define natural right to be natural power, and he will easily demonstrate, that whatever a man can do he hath a right to do.* Nothing can be plainer than the folly of this proceeding: but our pretenders to the *lumen siccum*, are often so passionately prejudiced against religion, as to swallow the grossest nonsense and sophistry of weak and wicked writers for demonstration.

XXX. And so great a noise do these men make with their thinking, reasoning, and demonstrating, as to prejudice some well-meaning persons against all use and improvement of reason. Honest Demea, having seen a neighbour of his ruined by the vices of a free-thinking son, contracted such a prejudice against thinking, that he would not suffer his own to read Euclid, being told it might teach him to think: till a friend convinced him the epidemical distemper was not thinking, but only the want and affectation of it. I know an eminent free-thinker, who never goes to bed, without a gallon of wine in his belly, and is sure to replenish before the fumes are off his brain, by which means he has not had one sober thought these seven years; another that would not for the world lose the privilege and reputation of free thinking, who games all night, and lies in bed all day: and as for the outside or appearance of thought in that meagre minute philosopher Ibycus, it is an effect, not of thinking, but of carking, cheating, and writing in an office. Strange, said he, that such men should set up for free-thinkers! But it is yet more strange that other men should be out of conceit with thinking and reasoning, for the sake of such pretenders. I answered, that some good men conceived an opposition between reason and religion, faith and knowledge, nature and grace; and that, consequently, the way to promote religion was, to quench the light of nature, and discourage all rational inquiry.

XXXI. How right the intentions of these men may be, replied Crito, I shall not say; but surely their notions are very wrong. Can any thing be more dishonourable to religion, than the representing it as an unreasonable, unnatural, ignorant institution? God is the father of all lights, whether natural or revealed. Natural concupiscence is one thing, and the light of nature another. You cannot therefore argue from the former against the latter: neither can you from science falsely so called, against real knowledge. Whatever therefore is said of the one in holy scripture is not to be interpreted of the other. I insisted, that human learning in the hands of divines, had from time to time, created great disputes and divisions in the church. As abstracted metaphysics, replied Crito, have always had a tendency

* Tractat. Politic. c. 2.

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to produce disputes among Christians, as well as other men, so it should seem that genuine truth and knowledge would allay this humour, which makes men sacrifice the undisputed duties of peace and charity to disputable notions. After all, said I, whatever may be said for reason, it is plain, the sceptics and infidels of the age are not to be cured by it. I will not dispute this point, said Crito, in order to cure a distemper, you should consider what produced it. Had men reasoned themselves into a wrong opinion, one might hope to reason them out of it. But this is not the case; the infidelity of most minute philosophers seeming an effect of very different motives from thought and reason, little incidents, vanity, disgust, humour, inclination, without the least assistance from reason, are often known to make infidels. Where the general tendency of a doctrine is disagreeable, the mind is prepared to relish and improve every thing that with the least pretence seems to make against it. Hence the coarse manners of a country curate, the polite ones of a chaplain, the wit of a minute philosopher, a jest, a song, a tale can serve instead of a reason for infidelity. Bupalus preferred a rake in the church, and then made use of him as an argument against it. Vice, indolence, faction, and fashion produce minute philosophers, and mere petulancy not a few. Who then can expect a thing so irrational and capricious should yield to reason? It may nevertheless, be worth while to argue against such men, and expose their fallacies, if not for their own sake, yet for the sake of others; as it may lessen their credit, and prevent the growth of their sect, by removing a prejudice in their favour, which sometimes inclines others as well as themselves to think they have made a monopoly of human reason.

XXXII. The most general pretext which looks like reason, is taken from the variety of opinions about religion. This is a resting stone to a lazy and superficial mind: but one of more spirit and a juster way of thinking, makes it a step whence he looks about, and proceeds to examine, and compare the differing institutions of religion. He will observe, which of these is the most sublime and rational in its doctrines, most venerable in its mysteries, most useful in its precepts, most decent in its worship? Which createth the noblest hopes, and most worthy views? He will consider their rise and progress; which owest least to human arts or arms? Which flatters the senses and gross inclinations of men? Which adorns and improves the most excellent part of our nature? Which hath been propagated in the most wonderful manner? Which hath surmounted the greatest difficulties, or shown the most disinterested zeal and sincerity in its professors? He will inquire, which best accords with nature and history? He will consider, what savours of the world, and what looks like wisdom from above? He will be careful to

separate human allay from that which is divine; and upon the whole, form his judgment like a reasonable free-thinker. But instead of taking such a rational course, one of these hasty sceptics shall conclude without demurring, there is no wisdom in politics, no honesty in dealings, no knowledge in philosophy, no truth in religion; and all by one and the same sort of inference, from the numerous examples of folly, knavery, ignorance, and error, which are to be met with in the world. But, as those who are unknowing in every thing else, imagine themselves sharp-sighted in religion, this learned sophism is oftenest levelled against Christianity.

XXXIII. In my opinion, he, that would convince an infidel who can be brought to reason, ought in the first place clearly to convince him of the being of a God, it seeming to me, that any man who is really a theist, cannot be an enemy to the Christian religion: and that the ignorance or disbelief of this fundamental point, is that which at bottom constitutes the minute philosopher. I imagine they, who are acquainted with the great authors in the minute philosophy, need not be told of this. The being of a God is capable of clear proof, and a proper object of human reason: whereas the mysteries of his nature, and indeed whatever there is of mystery in religion, to endeavour to explain, and prove by reason, is a vain attempt. It is sufficient if we can show there is nothing absurd or repugnant in our belief of those points, and instead of framing hypotheses to explain them, we use our reason only for answering the objections brought against them. But on all occasions, we ought to distinguish the serious, modest, ingenuous man of sense, who hath scruples about religion, and behaves like a prudent man in doubt, from the minute philosophers, those profane and conceited men, who must needs proselyte others to their own doubts. When one of this stamp presents himself, we should consider what species he is of: whether a first or second-hand philosopher, a libertine, scorner, or sceptic? Each character requiring a peculiar treatment. Some men are too ignorant to be humble, without which there can be no docility: but though a man must in some degree have thought and considered to be capable of being convinced, yet it is possible the most ignorant may be laughed out of his opinions. I knew a woman of sense reduce two minute philosophers, who had long been a nuisance to the neighbourhood, by taking her cue from their predominant affectations. The one set up for being the most incredulous man upon earth, the other for the most unbounded freedom. She observed to the first, that he who had credulity sufficient to trust the most valuable things, his life and fortune, to his apothecary and lawyer, ridiculously affected the character of incredulous, by refusing to trust his soul, a thing in his own account but a mere trifle, to his parish-priest.

The other, being what you call a beau, she made sensible how absolute a slave he was in point of dress, to him the most important thing in the world, while he was earnestly contending for a liberty of thinking, with which he never troubled his head; and how much more it concerned and became him to assert an independency on fashion, and obtain scope for his genius, where it was best qualified to exert itself. The minute philosophers at first hand are very few, and considered in themselves, of small consequence: but their followers, who pin their faith upon them, are numerous, and not less confident than credulous; there being something in the air and manner of these second-hand philosophers, very apt to disconcert a man of gravity and argument, and much more difficult to be borne than the weight of their objections.

XXXIV. Crito having made an end, Euphranor declared it to be his opinion, that it would much conduce to the public benefit, if, instead of discouraging free-thinking, there was erected in the midst of this free country a dianoetic academy, or seminary for free-thinkers, provided with retired chambers, and galleries, and shady walks and groves, where, after seven years spent in silence and meditation, a man might commence a genuine free-thinker, and from that time forward, have license to think what he pleased, and a badge to distinguish him from counterfeits. In good earnest, said Crito, I imagine that thinking is the great *desideratum* of the present age; and that the real cause of whatever is amiss, may justly be reckoned the general neglect of education, in those who need it most, the people of fashion. What can be expected where those who have the most influence, have the least sense, and those who are sure to be followed set the worst example? Where youth so uneducated are yet so forward? Where modesty is esteemed pusillanimity, and a deference to years, knowledge, religion, laws, want of sense and spirit? Such untimely growth of genius would not have been valued or encouraged by the wise men of antiquity; whose sentiments on this point are so ill suited to the genius of our times, that it is to be feared modern ears could not bear them. But however ridiculous such maxims might seem to our British youth, who are so capable and so forward to try experiments, and mend the constitution of their country, I believe it will be admitted by men of sense, that if the governing part of mankind would in these days, for experiment's sake, consider themselves in that old Homerical light as pastors of the people, whose duty it was to improve their flock, they would soon find that this is to be done by an education very different from the modern, and other-guess maxims than those of the minute philosophy. If our youth were really inured to thought and reflection, and an acquaintance with the excellent writers of antiquity, we should

soon see that licentious humour, vulgarly called *free-thinking*, banished from the presence of gentlemen, together with ignorance and ill-taste; which as they are inseparable from vice, so men follow vice for the sake of pleasure, and fly from virtue through an abhorrence of pain. Their minds therefore betimes should be formed and accustomed to receive pleasure and pain from proper objects, or, which is the same thing, to have their inclinations and aversions rightly placed. Καλῶς χαίρειν ἢ μισεῖν. This according to Plato and Aristotle, was the ὀρθὴ παιδεία, the right education.* And those who, in their own minds, their health, or their fortunes, feel the cursed effects of a wrong one, would do well to consider, they cannot better make amends for what was amiss in themselves, than by preventing the same in their posterity. While Crito was saying this, company came in, which put an end to our conversation.

* Plato in Protag. et Aristot. Ethic. ad Nicom. lib. ii. c. 2, et lib. x. c. 9.

END OF VOL. I.

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